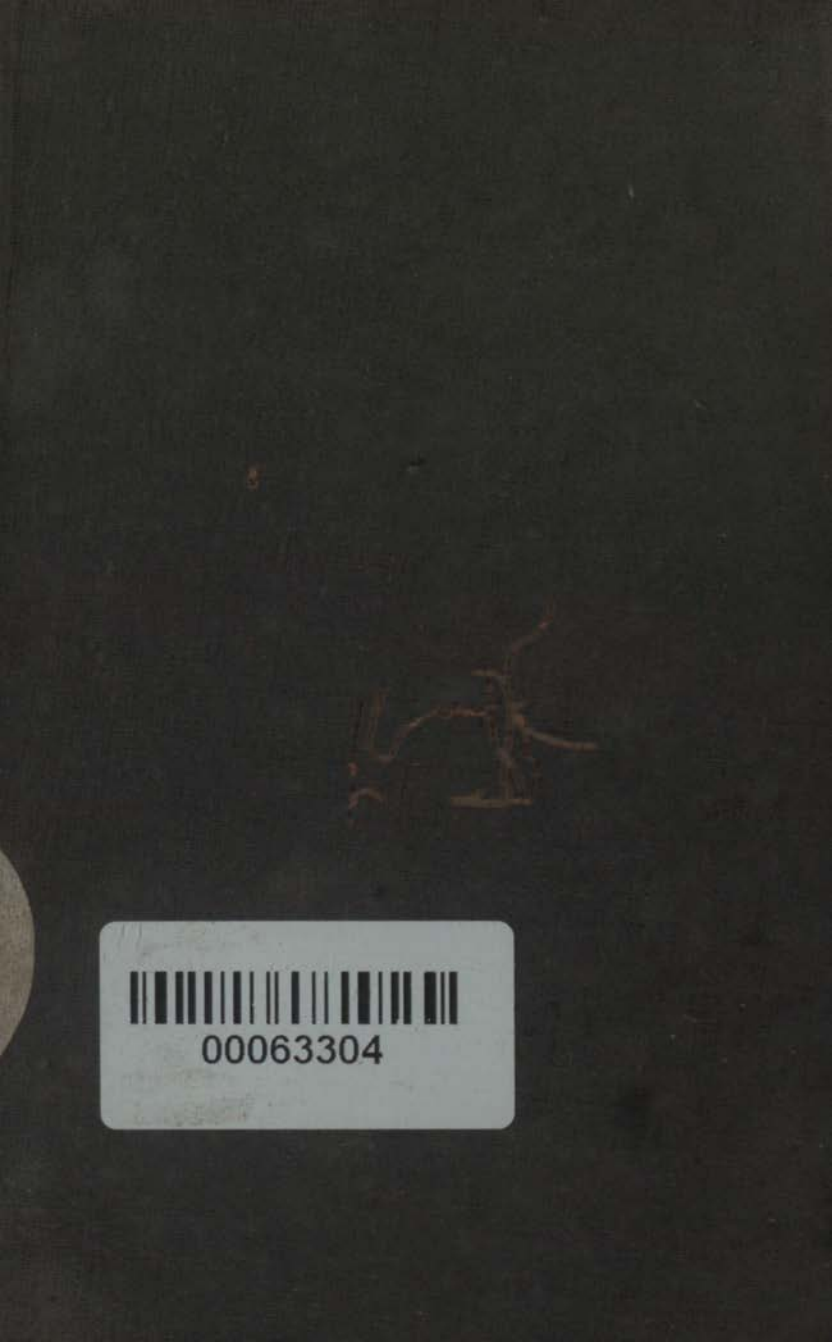
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HORACE

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BY

THEODORE MARTIN

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
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PREFACE.

No writer of antiquity has taken a stronger hold upon the modern mind than Horace. The causes of this are manifold, but three may be especially noted: his broad human sympathies, his vigorous common-sense, and his consummate mastery of expression. The mind must be either singularly barren or singularly cold to which Horace does not speak. The scholar, the statesman, the soldier, the man of the world, the town-bred man, the lover of the country, the thoughtful and the careless, he who reads much, and he who reads little, all find in his pages more or less to amuse their fancy, to touch their feelings, to quicken their observation, to nerve their convictions, to put into happy phrase the deductions of their experience. His poetical sentiment is not pitched in too high a key for the unimaginative, but it is always so genuine that the most imaginative feel its charm. His wisdom is deeper than it seems, so simple, practical, and direct as it is in its application; and his moral teaching more spiritual and penetrating than is apparent on a superficial study. He does not fall into the common error

of didactic writers, of laying upon life more than it will bear; but he insists that it shall at least bear the fruits of integrity, truth, honour, justice, self-denial, and brotherly charity. Over and above the mere literary charm of his works, too—and herein, perhaps, lies no small part of the secret of his popularity—the warm heart and thoroughly urbane nature of the man are felt instinctively by his readers, and draw them to him as to a friend.

Hence it is that we find he has been a manual with men the most diverse in their natures, culture, and pursuits. Dante ranks him next after Homer. Montaigne, as might be expected, knows him by heart. Fenelon and Bossuet never weary of quoting him. La Fontaine polishes his own exquisite style upon his model; and Voltaire calls him "the best of preachers." Hooker escapes with him to the fields to seek oblivion of a hard life, made harder by a shrewish spouse. Lord Chesterfield tells us, "When I talked my best I quoted Horace." To Boileau and to Wordsworth he is equally dear. Condorcet dies in his dungeon with Horace open by his side; and in Gibbon's militia days, "on every march," he says, "in every journey, Horace was always in my pocket, and often in my hand." And as it has been, so it is. In many a pocket, where this might be least expected, lies a well-thumbed Horace; and in many a devout Christian heart the maxims of the gentle, genial pagan find a place near the higher teachings of a greater master.

Where so much of a writer's charm lies, as with Horace, in exquisite aptness of language, and in a

style perfect for fulness of suggestion combined with brevity and grace, the task of indicating his characteristics in translation demands the most liberal allowance from the reader. In this volume the writer has gladly availed himself, where he might, of the privilege liberally accorded to him to use the admirable translations of the late Mr Conington, which are distinguished in all cases by the addition of his initial. The other translations are the writer's own. For these it would be superfluous to claim indulgence. This is sure to be granted by those who know their Horace well. With those who do not, these translations will not be wholly useless, if they serve to pique them into cultivating an acquaintance with the original sufficiently close to justify them in turning critics of their defects.

QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACCUS.

BORN, A.U.C. 689, B.C. 65. DIED, A.U.C. 746, B.C. 8.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH.—EDUCATION.—CAMPAIGN WITH BRUTUS AND CASSIUS.

LIKE the two greatest lyrists of modern times, Burns and Béranger, Horace sprang from the ranks of the people. His father had been a slave, and he was himself cradled among "the huts where poor men lie." Like these great lyrists, too, Horace was proud of his origin. After he had become the intimate associate of the first men in Rome—nay, the bosom friend of the generals and statesmen who ruled the world—he was at pains on more occasions than one to call attention to the fact of his humble birth, and to let it be known that, had he to begin life anew, he was so far from desiring a better ancestry that he would, like Andrew Marvell, have made "his destiny his choice." Nor is this done with the pretentious affectation of the parvenu, eager to bring under notice the contrast between what he is and what he has been, and to insinuate his personal deserts, while pretending to disclaim them. Horace has no such false humility. He was proud, and he makes no secret that he was so, of the name he had made,—proud of it for himself and for the class

from which he had sprung. But it was his practice, as well as his settled creed, to rate at little the accidents of birth and fortune. A stronger and higher feeling, however, more probably dictated the avowal,—gratitude to that slave-born father whose character and careful training had stamped an abiding influence upon the life and genius of his son. Neither might he have been unwilling in this way quietly to protest against the worship of rank and wealth which he saw everywhere around him, and which was demoralising society in Rome. The favourite of the Emperor, the companion of Mæcenas, did not himself forget, neither would he let others forget, that he was a freedman's son; and in his own way was glad to declare, as Béranger did of himself at the height of his fame,

"Je suis vilain, et très vilain."

The Roman poets of the pre-Augustan and Augustan periods, unlike Horace, were all well born. Catullus and Calvus, his great predecessors in lyric poetry, were men of old and noble family Virgil, born five years before Horace, was the son of a Roman citizen of good property. Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, who were respectively six, fourteen, and twenty years his juniors, were all of equestrian rank. Horace's father was a freedman of the town of Venusia, the modern Venosa. It is supposed that he had been a *publicus servus*, or slave of the community, and took his distinctive name from the Horatian tribe, to which the community belonged. He had saved a moderate competency in the vocation of *coactor*, a name applied both to the collectors of public

revenue and of money at sales by public auction. To which of these classes he belonged is uncertain—most probably to the latter; and in those days of frequent confiscations, when property was constantly changing hands, the profits of his calling, at best a poor one, may have been unusually large. With the fruits of his industry he had purchased a small farm near Venusia, upon the banks of the Aufidus, the modern Ofanto, on the confines of Lucania and Apulia. Here, on the 8th of December, B.C. 65, the poet was born; and this picturesque region of mountain, forest, and river, "meet nurse of a poetic child," impressed itself indelibly on his memory, and imbued him with the love of nature, especially in her rugged aspect, which remained with him through life. He appears to have left the locality in early life, and never to have revisited it; but when he has occasion to describe its features (Odes, III. 4), he does this with a sharpness and truth of touch, which show how closely he had even then begun to observe. Acherontia, perched nest-like among the rocks, the Bantine thickets, the fat meadows of low-lying Forentum, which his boyish eye had noted, attest to this hour the vivid accuracy of his description. The passage in question records an interesting incident in the poet's childhood. Escaping from his nurse, he has rambled away from the little cottage on the slopes of Mount Vultur, whither he had probably been taken from the sultry Venusia to pass his *villeggiatura* during the heat of summer, and is found asleep, covered with fresh myrtle and laurel leaves, in which the wood-pigeons have swathed him.

"When from my nurse erewhile, on Vultur's steep,
I stray'd beyond the bound
Of our small homestead's ground,
Was I, fatigued with play, beneath a heap
Of fresh leaves sleeping found,—

"Strewn by the storied doves; and wonder fell
On all, their nest who keep
On Acherontia's steep,
Or in Forentum's low rich pastures dwell,
Or Bantine woodlands deep,

"That safe from bears and adders in such place
I lay, and slumbering smiled,
O'erstrewn with myrtle wild,
And laurel, by the god's peculiar grace
No craven-hearted child."

The incident thus recorded is not necessarily discredited by the circumstance of its being closely akin to what is told by Ælian of Pindar, that a swarm of bees settled upon his lips, and fed him with honey, when he was left exposed upon the highway. It probably had some foundation in fact, whatever may be thought of the implied augury of the special favour of the gods which is said to have been drawn from it at the time. In any case, the picture of the strayed child, sleeping unconscious of its danger, with its hands full of wild-flowers, is pleasant to contemplate.

In his father's house, and in those of the Apulian peasantry around him, Horace became familiar with the simple virtues of the poor, their industry and independence, their integrity, chastity, and self-denial, which he loved to contrast in after years with the

luxury and vice of imperial Rome. His mother he would seem to have lost early. No mention of her occurs, directly or indirectly, throughout his poems; and remarkable as Horace is for the warmth of his affections, this could scarcely have happened had she not died when he was very young. He appears also to have been an only child. This doubtless drew him closer to his father, and the want of the early influences of mother or sister may serve to explain why one misses in his poetry something of that gracious tenderness towards womanhood, which, looking to the sweet and loving disposition of the man, one might otherwise have expected to find in it. That he was no common boy we may be very sure, even if this were not manifest from the fact that his father resolved to give him a higher education than was to be obtained under a provincial schoolmaster. With this view, although little able to afford the expense, he took his son, when about twelve years old, to Rome, and gave him the best education the capital could supply. No money was spared to enable him to keep his position among his fellow-scholars of the higher ranks. He was waited on by several slaves, as though he were the heir to a considerable fortune. At the same time, however, he was not allowed either to feel any shame for his own order, or to aspire to a position which his patrimony was unable to maintain. His father taught him to look forward to some situation akin to that in which his own modest competency had been acquired; and to feel that, in any sphere, culture, self-respect, and prudent self-control must command influence, and

afford the best guarantee for happiness. In reading this part of Horace's story, as he tells it himself, one is reminded of Burns's early lines about his father and himself:—

"My father was a farmer upon the Carrick border,
And carefully he bred me up in decency and order.
He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a farthing,
For without an honest manly heart no man was worth regarding."

The parallel might be still further pursued. "My father," says Gilbert Burns, "was for some time almost the only companion we had. He conversed familiarly on all subjects with us as if we had been men, and was at great pains, while we accompanied him in the labours of the farm, to lead the conversation to such subjects as might tend to increase our knowledge, or confirm us in virtuous habits." How closely this resembles the method adopted with Horace by his father will be seen hereafter.*

Horace's literary master at Rome was Orbilius Pupillus, a grammarian, who had carried into his school his martinet habits as an old soldier; and who, thanks to Horace, has become a name (*plagosus Orbilius*, Orbilius of the birch) eagerly applied by many a suffering urchin to modern pedagogues who have resorted to the same material means of inculcating the

* Compare it, too, with what Horace reports of

"Ofellus the hind,
Though no scholar, a sage of exceptional kind,"

in the Second Satire of the Second Book, from line 114 to the end.

beauties of the classics. By this Busby of the period Horace was grounded in Greek, and made familiar, too familiar for his liking, with Ennius, Mævius, Pacuvius, Attius, Livius Andronicus, and other early Latin writers, whose unpruned vigour was distasteful to one who had already begun to appreciate the purer and not less vigorous style of Homer and other Greek authors. Horace's father took care that he should acquire all the accomplishments of a Roman gentleman, in which music and rhetoric were, as a matter of course, included. But, what was of still more importance during this critical period of the future poet's first introduction to the seductions of the capital, he enjoyed the advantages of his father's personal superintendence and of a careful moral training. His father went with him to all his classes, and, being himself a man of shrewd observation and natural humour, he gave the boy's studies a practical bearing by directing his attention to the follies and vices of the luxurious and dissolute society around him, showing him how incompatible they were with the dictates of reason and common-sense, and how disastrous in their consequences to the good name and happiness of those who yielded to their seductions. The method he pursued is thus described by Horace (Satires, I. 4) :—

"Should then my humorous vein run wild, some latitude allow.
I learned the habit from the best of fathers, who employed
Some living type to stamp the vice he wished me to avoid.
Thus temperate and frugal when exhorting me to be,
And with the competence content which he had stored for me,

'Look, boy!' he'd say, 'at Albius' son—observe his sorry plight!
And Barrus, that poor beggar there! Say, are not these a sight,
To warn a man from squandering his patrimonial means?'
When counselling me to keep from vile amours with common queans;
'Sectanus, ape him not!' he'd say; or, urging to forswear
Intrigue with matrons, when I might taste lawful joys elsewhere;
'Trebonius' fame is blurred since he was in the manner caught.
The reasons why this should be shunned, and why that should be sought,
The sages will explain; enough for me, if I uphold
The faith and morals handed down from our good sires of old,
And, while you need a guardian, keep your life pure and your name.
When years have hardened, as they will, your judgment and your frame,
You'll swim without a float!' And so, with talk like this, he won
And moulded me, while yet a boy. Was something to be done,
Hard it might be—'For this,' he'd say, 'good warrant you can quote'—
And then as model pointed to some public man of note.
Or was there something to be shunned, then he would urge, 'Can you
One moment doubt that acts like these are base and futile too,
Which have to him and him such dire disgrace and trouble bred?'
And as a neighbour's death appals the sick, and, by the dread

Of dying, forces them to put upon their lusts restraint,
So tender minds are oft deterred from vices by the taint
They see them bring on others' names; 'tis thus that I from those
Am all exempt, which bring with them a train of shames and woes."

Nor did Horace only inherit from his father, as he here says, the kindly humour and practical good sense which distinguish his satirical and didactic writings, and that manly independence which he preserved through the temptations of a difficult career. Many of "the rugged maxims hewn from life" with which his works abound are manifestly but echoes of what the poet had heard from his father's lips. Like his own Ofellus, and the elders of the race—not, let us hope, altogether bygone—of peasant-farmers in Scotland, described by Wordsworth as "Religious men, who give to God and men their dues,"—the Apulian freedman had a fund of homely wisdom at command, not gathered from books, but instinct with the freshness and force of direct observation and personal conviction. The following exquisite tribute by Horace to his worth is conclusive evidence how often and how deeply he had occasion to be grateful, not only for the affectionate care of this admirable father, but also for the bias and strength which that father's character had given to his own. It has a further interest, as occurring in a poem addressed to Mæcenas, a man of ancient family and vast wealth, in the early days of that acquaintance with the poet which was afterwards to ripen into a lifelong friendship.

"Yet if some trivial faults, and these but few,
My nature, else not much amiss, imbue
(Just as you wish away, yet scarcely blame,
A mole or two upon a comely frame),
If no man may arraign me of the vice
Of lewdness, meanness, nor of avarice;
If pure and innocent I live, and dear
To those I love (self-praise is venial here),
All this I owe my father, who, though poor,
Lord of some few lean acres, and no more,
Was loath to send me to the village school,
Whereto the sons of men of mark and rule,—
Centurions, and the like,—were wont to swarm,
With slate and satchel on sinister arm,
And the poor dole of scanty pence to pay
The starveling teacher on the quarter-day;
But boldly took me, when a boy, to Rome,
There to be taught all arts that grace the home
Of knight and senator. To see my dress,
And slaves attending, you'd have thought, no less
Than patrimonial fortunes old and great
Had furnished forth the charges of my state.
When with my tutors, he would still be by,
Nor ever let me wander from his eye;
And, in a word, he kept me chaste (and this
Is virtue's crown) from all that was amiss,
Nor such in act alone, but in repute,
Till even scandal's tattling voice was mute.
No dread had he that men might taunt or jeer,
Should I, some future day, as auctioneer,
Or, like himself, as tax-collector, seek
With petty fees my humble means to eke.
Nor should I then have murmured. Now I know,
More earnest thanks, and loftier praise I owe.
Reason must fail me, ere I cease to own
With pride, that I have such a father known;

Nor shall I stoop my birth to vindicate,
By charging, like the herd, the wrong on Fate,
That I was not of noble lineage sprung:
Far other creed inspires my heart and tongue.
For now should Nature bid all living men
Retrace their years, and live them o'er again,
Each culling, as his inclination bent,
His parents for himself, with mine content,
I would not choose whom men endow as great
With the insignia and seats of state;
And, though I seemed insane to vulgar eyes,
Thou wouldst perchance esteem me truly wise,
In thus refusing to assume the care
Of irksome state I was unused to bear."

The education, of which Horace's father had laid the foundation at Rome, would not have been complete without a course of study at Athens, then the capital of literature and philosophy, as Rome was of political power. Thither Horace went somewhere between the age of 17 and 20. "At Rome," he says (Epistles, II. ii. 23),

"I had my schooling, and was taught
Achilles' wrath, and all the woes it brought;
At classic Athens, where I went ere long,
I learned to draw the line 'twixt right and wrong,
And search for truth, if so she might be seen,
In Academic groves of blissful green." (C.)

At Athens he found many young men of the leading Roman families—Bibulus, Messalla, Corvinus, the younger Cicero, and others—engaged in the same pursuits with himself, and he contracted among them many enduring friendships. In the political lull which ensued between the battle of Pharsalia (B.C.

48) and the death of Julius Cæsar (B.C. 44), he was enabled to devote himself without interruption to the studies which had drawn him to that home of literature and the arts. But these were destined before long to be rudely broken. The tidings of that startling event had been hailed with delight by the youthful spirits, some of whom saw in the downfall of the great Dictator the dawn of a new era of liberty, while others hoped from it the return to power of the aristocratic party to which they belonged. In this mood Brutus found them when he arrived in Athens along with Cassius, on their way to take command of the Eastern provinces which had been assigned to them by the Senate. Cassius hurried on to his post in Syria, but Brutus lingered behind, ostensibly absorbed in the philosophical studies of the schools, but at the same time recruiting a staff of officers for his army from among the young Romans of wealth and family whom it was important he should attach to his party, and who were all eagerness to make his cause their own. Horace, infected by the general enthusiasm, joined his standard; and, though then only twenty-two, without experience, and with no special aptitude, physical or mental, for a military life, he was intrusted by Brutus with the command of a legion. There is no reason to suppose that he owed a command of such importance to any dearth of men of good family qualified to act as officers. It is, therefore, only reasonable to conclude, that even at this early period he was recognised in the brilliant society around him as a man of mark; and that Brutus, before

selecting him, had thoroughly satisfied himself that he possessed qualities which justified so great a deviation from ordinary rules, as the commission of so responsible a charge to a freedman's son. That Horace gave his commander satisfaction we know from himself. The line (Epistles, I. xx. 23), "*Me primis urbis belli placuisse domique*,"—

> "At home, as in the field, I made my way,
> And kept it, with the first men of the day,"—

can be read in no other sense. But while Horace had, beyond all doubt, made himself a strong party of friends who could appreciate his genius and attractive qualities, his appointment as military tribune excited jealousy among some of his brother officers, who considered that the command of a Roman legion should have been reserved for men of nobler blood — a jealousy at which he said, with his usual modesty, many years afterwards (Satires, I. vi. 45), he had no reason either to be surprised or to complain.

In B.C. 43, Brutus, with his army, passed from Macedonia to join Cassius in Asia Minor, and Horace took his part in their subsequent active and brilliant campaign there. Of this we get some slight incidental glimpses in his works. Thus, for example (Odes, II. 7), we find him reminding his comrade, Pompeius Varus, how

> "Full oft they sped the lingering day
> Quaffing bright wine, as in our tents we lay,
> With Syrian spikenard on our glistening hair."

The Syrian spikenard, *Malobathrum Syricum*, fixes the locality. Again, in the epistle to his friend Bullatius (Epistles, I. 11), who is making a tour in Asia, Horace speaks of several places as if from vivid recollection. In his usual dramatic manner, he makes Bullatius answer his inquiries as to how he likes the places he has seen :—

> "*You know what Lebedos is like;* so bare,
> With Gabii or Fidenæ 'twould compare;
> Yet there, methinks, I would accept my lot,
> My friends forgetting, by my friends forgot,
> Stand on the cliff at distance, and survey
> The stormy sea-god's wild Titanic play." (C.)

Horace himself had manifestly watched the angry surges from the cliffs of Lebedos. But a more interesting record of the Asiatic campaign, inasmuch as it is probably the earliest specimen of Horace's writing which we have, occurs in the Seventh Satire of the First Book. Persius, a rich trader of Clazomene, has a lawsuit with Rupilius, one of Brutus's officers, who went by the nickname of "King." Brutus, in his character of quæstor, has to decide the dispute, which in the hands of the principals degenerates, as disputes so conducted generally do, into a personal squabble. Persius leads off with some oriental flattery of the general and his suite. Brutus is "Asia's sun," and they the "propitious stars," all but Rupilius, who was

> "That pest,
> The Dog, whom husbandmen detest."

Rupilius, an old hand at slang, replies with a volley of rough sarcasms, "such as among the vineyards fly," and

> "Would make the passer-by
> Shout filthy names, but shouting fly"—

a description of vintage slang which is as true to-day as it was then. The conclusion is curious, as a punning allusion to the hereditary fame of Brutus as a puller-down of kings, which it must have required some courage to publish, when Augustus was omnipotent in Rome.

> "But Grecian Persius, after he
> Had been besprinkled plenteously
> With gall Italic, cries, 'By all
> The gods above, on thee I call,
> Oh Brutus, thou of old renown,
> For putting kings completely down,
> To save us! Wherefore do you not
> Despatch this King here on the spot?
> One of the tasks is this, believe,
> Which you are destined to achieve!'"

This is just such a squib as a young fellow might be expected to dash off for the amusement of his brother officers, while the incident which led to it was yet fresh in their minds. Slight as it is, one feels sure its preservation by so severe a critic of his own writings as Horace was due to some charm of association, or possibly to the fact that in it he had made his first essay in satire.

The defeat of Brutus at Philippi (B.C. 42) brought Horace's military career to a close. Even before this

decisive event, his dream of the re-establishment of liberty and the old Roman constitution had probably begun to fade away, under his actual experience of the true aims and motives of the mass of those whom Brutus and Cassius had hitherto been leading to victory, and satiating with plunder. Young aristocrats, who sneered at the freedman's son, were not likely to found any system of liberty worthy of the name, or to use success for nobler purposes than those of selfish ambition. Fighting was not Horace's vocation, and with the death of Brutus and those nobler spirits, who fell at Philippi rather than survive their hopes of freedom, his motive for fighting was at an end. To prolong a contest which its leaders had surrendered in despair was hopeless. He did not, therefore, like Pompeius Varus and others of his friends, join the party which, for a time, protracted the struggle under the younger Pompey. But, like his great leader, he had fought for a principle; nor could he have regarded otherwise than with horror the men who had overthrown Brutus, reeking as they were with the blood of a thousand proscriptions, and reckless as they had shown themselves of every civil right and social obligation. As little, therefore, was he inclined to follow the example of others of his distinguished friends and companions in arms, such as Valerius Messalla and Ælius Lamius, who not merely made their peace with Antony and Octavius, but cemented it by taking service in their army.

CHAPTER II.

RETURNS TO ROME AFTER BATTLE OF PHILIPPI.—EARLY POEMS.

AVAILING himself of the amnesty proclaimed by the conquerors, Horace found his way back to Rome. His father was dead; how long before is not known. If the little property at Venusium had remained unsold, it was of course confiscated. When the lands of men, like Virgil, who had taken no active part in the political conflicts of the day, were being seized to satisfy the rapacity of a mercenary soldiery, Horace's paternal acres were not likely to escape. In Rome he found himself penniless. How to live was the question; and, fortunately for literature, "chill penury" did not repress, but, on the contrary, stimulated his "noble rage."

> "Bated in spirit, and with pinions clipped,
> Of all the means my father left me stripped,
> Want stared me in the face, so then and there
> I took to scribbling verse in sheer despair."

Despoiled of his means, and smarting with defeat, Horace was just in the state of mind to strike vigor-

ously at men and manners which he did not like. Young, ardent, constitutionally hot in temper, eager to assert, amid the general chaos of morals public and private, the higher principles of the philosophic schools from which he had so recently come, irritated by the thousand mortifications to which a man of cultivated tastes and keenly alive to beauty is exposed in a luxurious city, where the prizes he values most are carried off, yet scarcely valued, by the wealthy vulgar, he was especially open to the besetting temptation of clever young men to write satire, and to write it in a merciless spirit. As he says of himself (Odes, I. 15),

> "In youth's pleasant spring-time,
> The shafts of my passion at random I flung,
> And, dashing headlong into petulant rhyme,
> I recked neither where nor how fiercely I stung."

Youth is always intolerant, and it is so easy to be severe; so seductive to say brilliant things, whether they be true or not. But there came a day, and it came soon, when Horace saw that triumphs gained in this way were of little value, and when he was anxious that his friends should join with him in consigning his smart and scurril lines (*celeres et criminosos Iambos*) to oblivion. The *amende* for some early lampoon which he makes in the Ode just quoted, though ostensibly addressed to a lady who had been its victim, was probably intended to cover a wider field.

Personal satire is always popular, but the fame it begets is bought dearly at the cost of lifelong enmities and many after-regrets. That Horace in his early

writings was personal and abusive is very clear, both from his own language and from a few of the poems of this class and period which survive. Some of these have no value, except as showing how badly even Horace could write, and how sedulously the better feeling and better taste of his riper years led him to avoid that most worthless form of satire which attacks where rejoinder is impossible, and irritates the temper but cannot possibly amend the heart. In others, the lash is applied with no less justice than vigour, as in the following invective, the fourth of the Epodes:—

"Such hate as nature meant to be
'Twixt lamb and wolf I feel for thee,
Whose hide by Spanish scourge is tanned,
And legs still bear the fetter's brand!
Though of your gold you strut so vain,
Wealth cannot change the knave in grain.
How! see you not, when striding down
The Via Sacra* in your gown
Good six ells wide, the passers there
Turn on you with indignant stare?
'This wretch,' such gibes your ear invade,
'By the Triumvirs'† scourges flayed,
Till even the crier shirked his toil,
Some thousand acres ploughs of soil
Falernian, and with his nags
Wears out the Appian highway's flags;
Nay, on the foremost seats, despite
Of Otho, sits and apes the knight.

* The Sacred Way, leading to the Capitol, a favourite lounge.

† When a slave was being scourged, under the orders of the Triumviri Capitales, a public crier stood by, and proclaimed the nature of his crime.

What boots it to despatch a fleet
So large, so heavy, so complete,
Against a gang of rascal knaves,
Thieves, corsairs, buccaneers, and slaves,
If villain of such vulgar breed
'Is in the foremost rank to lead?'"

Modern critics may differ as to whom this bitter invective was aimed at, but there could have been no doubt on that subject in Rome at the time. And if, as there is every reason to conclude, it was levelled at Sextus Menas, the lines, when first shown about among Horace's friends, must have told with great effect, and they were likely to be remembered long after the infamous career of this double-dyed traitor had come to a close. Menas was a freedman of Pompey the Great, and a trusted officer of his son Sextus.* He had recently (B.C. 38) carried over with him to Augustus a portion of Pompey's fleet which was under his command, and betrayed into his hands the islands of Corsica and Sardinia. For this act of treachery he was loaded with wealth and honours; and when Augustus, next year, fitted out a naval expedition against Sextus Pompeius, Menas received a command. It was probably lucky for Horace that this swaggering upstart, who was not likely to be scrupulous as to his means of revenge, went over the very next year to his former master, whom he again abandoned within a year to sell himself once more

* Shakespeare has introduced him in "Antony and Cleopatra," along with Menecrates and Varrius, as "friends to Sextus Pompeius."

to Augustus. That astute politician put it out of his power to play further tricks with the fleet, by giving him a command in Pannonia, where he was killed, B.C. 36, at the siege of Siscia, the modern Sissek.

Though Horace was probably best known in Rome in these early days as a writer of lampoons and satirical poems, in which the bitterness of his models Archilochus and Lucilius was aimed at, not very successfully—for bitterness and personal rancour were not natural to the man—he showed in other compositions signs of the true poetic spirit, which afterwards found expression in the consummate grace and finish of his Odes. To this class belongs the following poem (Epode 16), which, from internal evidence, appears to have been written B.C. 40, when the state of Italy, convulsed by civil war, was well calculated to fill him with despair. Horace had frequent occasion between this period and the battle of Actium, when the defeat and death of Antony closed the long struggle for supremacy between him and Octavius, to appeal to his countrymen against the waste of the best blood of Italy in civil fray, which might have been better spent in subduing a foreign foe, and spreading the lustre of the Roman arms. But if we are to suppose this poem written when the tidings of the bloody incidents of the Perusian campaign had arrived in Rome,—the reduction of the town of Perusia by famine, and the massacre of from two to three hundred prisoners, almost all of equestrian or senatorial rank,—we can well understand the feeling under which the poem is written.

To the Roman People.

Another age in civil wars will soon be spent and worn,
And by her native strength our Rome be wrecked and overborne,
That Rome, the Marsians could not crush, who border on our lands,
Nor the shock of threatening Porsena with his Etruscan bands,
Nor Capua's strength that rivalled ours, nor Spartacus the stern,
Nor the faithless Allobrogian, who still for change doth yearn.
Ay, what Germania's blue-eyed youth quelled not with ruthless sword,
Nor Hannibal by our great sires detested and abhorred,
We shall destroy with impious hands imbrued in brother's gore,
And wild beasts of the wood shall range our native land once more.
A foreign foe, alas! shall tread The City's ashes down,
And his horse's ringing hoofs shall smite her places of renown,
And the bones of great Quirinus, now religiously enshrined
Shall be flung by sacrilegious hands to the sunshine and the wind.
And if ye all from ills so dire ask how yourselves to free,
Or such at least as would not hold your lives unworthily,
No better counsel can I urge, than that which erst inspired
The stout Phocæans when from their doomed city they retired,
Their fields, their household gods, their shrines surrendering as a prey
To the wild boar and the ravening wolf; * so we, in our dismay,

* The story of the Phocæans is told by Herodotus (Ch. 165).

Where'er our wandering steps may chance to carry us should go,
Or wheresoe'er across the seas the fitful winds may blow.
How think ye then? If better course none offer, why should we
Not seize the happy auspices, and boldly put to sea?
But let us swear this oath;—"Whene'er, if e'er shall come the time,
Rocks upwards from the deep shall float, return shall not be crime;
Nor we be loath to back our sails, the ports of home to seek,
When the waters of the Po shall lave Matinum's rifted peak.
Or skyey Apenninus down into the sea be rolled,
Or wild unnatural desires such monstrous revel hold,
That in the stag's endearments the tigress shall delight,
And the turtle-dove adulterate with the falcon and the kite,
That unsuspicious herds no more shall tawny lions fear,
And the he-goat, smoothly sleek of skin, through the briny deep career!"
This having sworn, and what beside may our returning stay,
Straight let us all, this City's doomed inhabitants, away,
Or those that rise above the herd, the few of nobler soul;
The craven and the hopeless here on their ill-starred beds may loll.
Ye who can feel and act like men, this woman's wail give o'er,
And fly to regions far away beyond the Etruscan shore!

When their city was attacked by Harpagus, they retired in a body to make way for the Persians, who took possession of it. They subsequently returned, and put to the sword the Persian garrison which had been left in it by Harpagus. "Afterwards, when this was accomplished, they pronounced terrible imprecations on any who should desert the fleet; besides this, they sunk a mass of molten iron, and swore that they would never return to Phocæa until it should appear again."

The circling ocean waits us; then away, where nature smiles,
To those fair lands, those blissful lands, the rich and happy Isles!
Where Ceres year by year crowns all the untilled land with sheaves,
And the vine with purple clusters droops, unpruned of all her leaves;
Where the olive buds and burgeons, to its promise ne'er untrue,
And the russet fig adorns the tree, that graffshoot never knew;
Where honey from the hollow oaks doth ooze, and crystal rills
Come dancing down with tinkling feet from the sky-dividing hills;
There to the pails the she-goats come, without a master's word,
And home with udders brimming broad returns the friendly herd.
There round the fold no surly bear its midnight prowl doth make,
Nor teems the rank and heaving soil with the adder and the snake;
There no contagion smites the flocks, nor blight of any star
With fury of remorseless heat the sweltering herds doth mar.
Nor this the only bliss that waits us there, where drenching rains
By watery Eurus swept along ne'er devastate the plains,
Nor are the swelling seeds burnt up within the thirsty clods,
So kindly blends the seasons there the King of all the Gods.
That shore the Argonautic bark's stout rowers never gained,
Nor the wily she of Colchis with step unchaste profaned;
The sails of Sidon's galleys ne'er were wafted to that strand,
Nor ever rested on its slopes Ulysses' toilworn band:

For Jupiter, when he with brass the Golden Age alloyed,
That blissful region set apart by the good to be enjoyed;
With brass and then with iron he the ages seared, but ye,
Good men and true, to that bright home arise and follow me!

This poem, Lord Lytton has truly said, "has the character of youth in its defects and its beauties. The redundance of its descriptive passages is in marked contrast to the terseness of description which Horace studies in his Odes; and there is something declamatory in its general tone which is at variance with the simpler utterance of lyrical art. On the other hand, it has all the warmth of genuine passion, and in sheer vigour of composition Horace has rarely excelled it."

The idea of the Happy Isles, referred to in the poem, was a familiar one with the Greek poets. They became in time confounded with the Elysian fields, in which the spirits of the departed good and great enjoyed perpetual rest. It is as such that Ulysses mentions them in Tennyson's noble monologue:—

"It may be that the gulfs shall wash us down,
It may be we shall reach the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew."

These islands were supposed to be in the far west, and were probably the poetical amplification of some voyager's account of the Canaries or of Madeira. There has always been a region beyond the boundaries of civilisation to which the poet's fancy has turned for ideal happiness and peace. The difference between

ancient and modern is, that material comforts, as in this epode, enter largely into the dream of the ancient, while independence, beauty, and grandeur are the chief elements in the modern picture :—

"Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadth of Tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.
Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, droops the trailer from the crag ;
Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree,
Summer Isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea."

To the same class of Horace's early poems, though probably a few years later in date, belongs the following eulogium of a country life and its innocent enjoyments (Epode 2), the leading idea of which was embodied by Pope in the familiar lines, wonderful for finish as the production of a boy of eleven, beginning

"Happy the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound."

With characteristic irony Horace puts his fancies into the mouth of Alphius, a miserly money-lender. No one yearns so keenly for the country and its imagined peace as the overworked city man, when his pulse is low and his spirits weary with bad air and the reaction of over-excitement ; no one, as a rule, is more apt to tire of the homely and uneventful life which the country offers, or to find that, for him at least, its quietude

does not bring peace. It is not, therefore, at all out of keeping, although critics have taken exception to the poem on this ground, that Horace makes Alphius rhapsodise on the charms of a rural life, and having tried them, creep back within the year to his money-bags and his ten per cent. It was, besides, a favourite doctrine with him, which he is constantly enforcing in his later works, that everybody envies his neighbour's pursuits—until he tries them.

ALPHIUS.

Happy the man, in busy schemes unskilled,
Who, living simply, like our sires of old,
Tills the few acres, which his father tilled,
Vexed by no thoughts of usury or gold;

The shrilling clarion ne'er his slumber mars,
Nor quails he at the howl of angry seas;
He shuns the forum, with its wordy jars,
Nor at a great man's door consents to freeze.

The tender vine-shoots, budding into life,
He with the stately poplar-tree doth wed,
Lopping the fruitless branches with his knife,
And grafting shoots of promise in their stead;

Or in some valley, up among the hills,
Watches his wandering herds of lowing kine,
Or fragrant jars with liquid honey fills,
Or shears his silly sheep in sunny shine;

Or when Autumnus o'er the smiling land
Lifts up his head with rosy apples crowned,
Joyful he plucks the pears, which erst his hand
Graffed on the stem they're weighing to the ground;

Plucks grapes in noble clusters purple-dyed,
A gift for thee, Priapus, and for thee,
Father Sylvanus, where thou dost preside,
Warding his bounds beneath thy sacred tree.

Now he may stretch his careless limbs to rest,
Where some old ilex spreads its sacred roof;
Now in the sunshine lie, as likes him best,
On grassy turf of close elastic woof.

And streams the while glide on with murmurs low,
And birds are singing 'mong the thickets deep,
And fountains babble, sparkling as they flow,
And with their noise invite to gentle sleep.

But when grim winter comes, and o'er his grounds
Scatters its biting snows with angry roar,
He takes the field, and with a cry of hounds
Hunts down into the toils the foaming boar;

Or seeks the thrush, poor starveling, to ensnare,
In filmy net with bait delusive stored,
Entraps the travelled crane, and timorous hare,
Rare dainties these to glad his frugal board.

Who amid joys like these would not forget
The pangs which love to all its victims bears,
The fever of the brain, the ceaseless fret,
And all the heart's lamentings and despairs?

But if a chaste and blooming wife, beside,
The cheerful home with sweet young blossoms fills,
Like some stout Sabine, or the sunburnt bride
Of the lithe peasant of the Apulian hills,

Who piles the hearth with logs well dried and old
Against the coming of her wearied lord,
And, when at eve the cattle seek the fold,
Drains their full udders of the milky hoard;

And bringing forth from her well-tended store
A jar of wine, the vintage of the year,
Spreads an unpurchased feast,—oh then, not more
Could choicest Lucrine oysters give me cheer,

Or the rich turbot, or the dainty char,
If ever to our bays the winter's blast
Should drive them in its fury from afar;
Nor were to me a welcomer repast

The Afric hen or the Ionic snipe,
Than olives newly gathered from the tree,
That hangs abroad its clusters rich and ripe,
Or sorrel, that doth love the pleasant lea,

Or mallows wholesome for the body's need,
Or lamb foredoomed upon some festal day
In offering to the guardian gods to bleed,
Or kidling which the wolf hath marked for prey.

What joy, amidst such feasts, to see the sheep,
Full of the pasture, hurrying homewards come;
To see the wearied oxen, as they creep,
Dragging the upturned ploughshare slowly home!

Or, ranged around the bright and blazing hearth,
To see the hinds, a house's surest wealth,
Beguile the evening with their simple mirth,
And all the cheerfulness of rosy health!

Thus spake the miser Alphius; and, bent
Upon a country life, called in amain
The money he at usury had lent;—
But ere the month was out, 'twas lent again.

In this charming sketch of the peasant's life it is easy to see that Horace is drawing from nature, like Burns in his more elaborate picture of the "Cottar's

Saturday Night." Horace had obviously watched closely the ways of the peasantry round his Apulian home, as he did at a later date those of the Sabine country, and to this we owe many of the most delightful passages in his works. He omits no opportunity of contrasting their purity of morals, and the austere self-denial of their life, with the luxurious habits and reckless vice of the city life of Rome. Thus, in one of the finest of his Odes (Book III. 6), after painting with a few masterly strokes what the matrons and the fast young ladies of the imperial city had become, it was not from such as these, he continues, that the noble youth sprang "who dyed the seas with Carthaginian gore, overthrew Pyrrhus and great Antiochus and direful Hannibal," concluding in words which contrast by their suggestive terseness at the same time that they suggest comparison with the elaborated fulness of the epode just quoted :—

"But they, of rustic warriors wight
The manly offspring, learned to smite
The soil with Sabine spade,
And faggots they had cut, to bear
Home from the forest, whensoe'er
An austere mother bade ;

"What time the sun began to change
The shadows through the mountain range,
And took the yoke away
From the o'erwearied oxen, and
His parting car proclaimed at hand
The kindliest hour of day."

Another of Horace's juvenile poems, unique in subject and in treatment (Epode 5), gives evidence of a

picturesque power of the highest kind, stimulating the imagination, and swaying it with the feelings of pity and terror in a way to make us regret that he wrote no others in a similar vein. We find ourselves at midnight in the gardens of the sorceress Canidia, whither a boy of good family—his rank being clearly indicated by the reference to his purple *toga* and *bulla*—has been carried off from his home. His terrified exclamations, with which the poem opens, as Canidia and her three assistants surround him, glaring on him, with looks significant of their deadly purpose, through lurid flames fed with the usual ghastly ingredients of a witch's fire, carry us at once into the horrors of the scene. While one of the hags sprinkles her hell-drops through the adjoining house, another is casting up earth from a pit, in which the boy is presently imbedded to the chin, and killed by a frightful process of slow torture, in order that a love philtre of irresistible power may be concocted from his liver and spleen. The time, the place, the actors are brought before us with singular dramatic power. Canidia's burst of wonder and rage that the spells she deemed all-powerful have been counteracted by some sorceress of skill superior to her own, gives great reality to the scene; and the curses of the dying boy, launched with tragic vigour, and closing with a touch of beautiful pathos, bring it to an effective close.

The speculations as to who and what Canidia was, in which scholars have run riot, are conspicuous for absurdity, even among the wild and ridiculous conjectures as to the personages named by Horace in which the commentators have indulged. That some well-

known person was the original of Canidia is extremely probable, for professors of witchcraft abounded at the time, combining very frequently, like their modern successors, the arts of Medea with the attributes of Dame Quickly. What more natural than for a young poet to work up an effective picture out of the abundant suggestions which the current stories of such creatures and their doings presented to his hand? The popular belief in their power, the picturesque conditions under which their spells were wrought, the wild passions in which lay the secret of their hold upon the credulity of their victims, offered to the Roman poet, just as they did to our own Elizabethan dramatists, a combination of materials most favourable for poetic treatment. But that Horace had, as many of his critics contend, a feeling of personal vanity, the pique of a discarded lover, to avenge, is an assumption wholly without warrant. He was the last man, at any time or under any circumstances, to have had any relations of a personal nature with a woman of Canidia's class. However inclined he may have been to use her and her practices for poetic purposes, he manifestly not only saw through the absurdity of her pretensions, but laughed at her miserable impotence, and meant that others should do the same. It seems to be impossible to read the 8th of his First Book of his Satires, and not come to this conclusion. That satire consists of the monologue of a garden god, set up in the garden which Mæcenas had begun to lay out on the Esquiline Hill. This spot had until recently been the burial-ground of the Roman poor, a quarter noisome by day, and the

haunt of thieves and beasts of prey by night. On this obscene spot, littered with skulls and dead men's bones, Canidia and her accomplice Sagana are again introduced, digging a pit with their nails, into which they pour the blood of a coal-black ewe, which they had previously torn limb-meal,

> "So to evoke the shade and soul
> Of dead men, and from these to wring
> Responses to their questioning."

They have with them two effigies, one of wax and the other of wool—the latter the larger of the two, and overbearing the other, which cowers before it,

> "Like one that stands
> Beseeching in the hangman's hands.
> On Hecate one, Tisiphone
> The other calls; and you might see
> Serpents and hell-hounds thread the dark,
> Whilst, these vile orgies not to mark,
> The moon, all bloody red of hue,
> Behind the massive tombs withdrew."

The hags pursue their incantations; higher and higher flames their ghastly fire, and the grizzled wolves and spotted snakes slink in terror to their holes, as the shrieks and muttered spells of the beldams make the moon-forsaken night more hideous. But after piling up his horrors with the most elaborate skill, as if in the view of some terrible climax, the poet makes them collapse into utter farce. Disgusted by their intrusion on his privacy, the Priapus adopts a simple but exceedingly vulgar expedient to alarm these appalling hags. In an instant they fall into the most abject

terror, suspend their incantations, and, tucking up their skirts, make off for the more comfortable quarters of the city as fast as their trembling limbs can carry them—Canidia, the great enchantress, dropping her false teeth, and her attendant Sagana parting company with her wig, by the way :—

> "While you
> With laughter long and loud might view
> Their herbs, and charmed adders wound
> In mystic coils, bestrew the ground."

And yet grave scholars gravely ask us to believe that Canidia was an old mistress of the poet's! These poems evidently made a success, and Horace returned to the theme in his 17th Epode. Here he writes as though he had been put under a spell by Canidia, in revenge for his former calumnies about her.

> "My youth has fled, my rosy hue
> Turned to a wan and livid blue ;
> Blanched by thy mixtures is my hair ;
> No respite have I from despair.
> The days and nights, they wax and wane,
> Yet bring me no release from pain ;
> Nor can I ease, howe'er I gasp,
> The spasm, which holds me in its grasp."

Here we have all the well-known symptoms of a man under a malign magical influence. In this extremity Horace affects to recant all the mischief he has formerly spoken of the enchantress. Let her name what penance he will, he is ready to perform it. If a hundred steers will appease her wrath, they are hers ; or if she prefers to be sung of as the chaste and good, and

to range above the spheres as a golden star, his lyre is at her service. Her parentage is as unexceptionable as her life is pure, but while ostentatiously disclaiming his libels, the poet takes care to insinuate them anew, by apostrophising her in conclusion, thus:—

> "Thou who dost ne'er in haglike wont
> Among the tombs of paupers hunt
> For ashes newly laid in ground,
> Love-charms and philtres to compound,
> Thy heart is gentle, pure thy hands."

Of course, Canidia is not mollified by such a recantation as this. The man who,

> "Branding her name with ill renown,
> Made her the talk of all the town,"

is not so lightly to be forgiven.

> "You'd have a speedy doom? But no,
> It shall be lingering, sharp, and slow."

The pangs of Tantalus, of Prometheus, or of Sisyphus, are but the types of what his shall be. Let him try to hang, drown, stab himself—his efforts will be vain:—

> "Then comes my hour of triumph, then
> I'll goad you till you writhe again;
> Then shall you curse the evil hour
> You made a mockery of my power."

She then triumphantly reasserts the powers to which she lays claim. What! I, she exclaims, who can waste life as the waxen image of my victim melts before my magic fire*—I, who can bring down the moon from her

* Thus Hecate in Middleton's "Witch" assures to the Duchess of Glo'ster "a sudden and subtle death" to her victim:—

sphere, evoke the dead from their ashes, and turn the affections by my philtres,—

> "Shall I my potent art bemoan
> As impotent 'gainst thee alone?"

Surely all this is as purely the work of imagination as Middleton's "Witch," or the Hags in "Macbeth," or in Goethe's 'Faust.' Horace used Canidia as a byword for all that was hateful in the creatures of her craft, filthy as they were in their lives and odious in their persons. His literary and other friends were as familiar with her name in this sense as we are with those of Squeers and Micawber, as types of a class; and the joke was well understood when, many years after, in the 8th of his Second Book of Satires, he said that Nasidienus's dinner-party broke up without their eating a morsel of the dishes after a certain point, —"As if a pestilential blast from Canidia's throat, more venomous than that of African vipers, had swept across them."

> "His picture made in wax, and gently molten
> By a blue fire, kindled with dead men's eyes,
> Will waste him by degrees."—

An old delusion. We find it in Theocritus, where a girl, forsaken by her lover, resorts to the same desperate restorative (Idylls ii. 28)—

> "As this image of wax I melt here by aidance demonic,
> Myndian Delphis shall so melt with love's passion anon."

Again Ovid (Heroides vi. 91) makes Hypsipyle say of Medea:

> "The absent she binds with her spells, and figures of wax she devises,
> And in their agonised spleen fine-pointed needles she thrusts."

CHAPTER III.

INTRODUCTION TO MÆCENAS.—THE JOURNEY TO BRUNDUSIUM.

HORACE had not been long in Rome, after his return from Greece, before he had made himself a name. With what he got from the booksellers, or possibly by the help of friends, he had purchased a patent place in the Quæstor's department, a sort of clerkship of the Treasury, which he continued to hold for many years, if not indeed to the close of his life. The duties were light, but they demanded, and at all events had, his occasional attention, even after he was otherwise provided for. Being his own—bought by his own money—it may have gratified his love of independence to feel that, if the worst came to the worst, he had his official salary to fall back upon. Among his friends, men of letters are at this time, as might have been expected, found to be most conspicuous. Virgil, who had recently been despoiled, like himself, of his paternal property, took occasion to bring his name before Mæcenas, the confidential adviser and minister of Octavius, in whom he had himself found a helpful friend. This was followed up by the commen-

dation of Varius, already celebrated as a writer of Epic poetry, and whose tragedy of "Thyestes," if we are to trust Quintilian, was not unworthy to rank with the best tragedies of Greece. Mæcenas may not at first have been too well disposed towards a follower of the republican party, who had not been sparing of his satire against many of the supporters and favourites of Octavius. He sent for Horace, however (B.C. 39), and any prejudice on this score, if prejudice there was, was ultimately got over. Mæcenas took time to form his estimate of the man, and it was not till nine months after their first interview that he sent for Horace again. When he did so, however, it was to ask him to consider himself for the future among the number of his friends. This part of Horace's story is told with admirable brevity and good feeling in the Satire from which we have already quoted, addressed to Mæcenas (B. I. Sat. 6) a few years afterwards.

"Lucky I will not call myself, as though
Thy friendship I to mere good fortune owe.
No chance it was secured me thy regards,
But Virgil first, that best of men and bards,
And then kind Varius mentioned what I was.
Before you brought, with many a faltering pause,
Dropping some few brief words (for bashfulness
Robbed me of utterance) I did not profess
That I was sprung of lineage old and great,
Or used to canter round my own estate
On Satureian barb, but what and who
I was as plainly told. As usual, you
Brief answer make me. I retire, and then,
Some nine months after, summoning me again,

You bid me 'mongst your friends assume a place :
And proud I feel that thus I won your grace,
Not by an ancestry long known to fame,
But by my life, and heart devoid of blame."

The name of Mæcenas is from this time inseparably associated with that of Horace. From what little is authentically known of him, this much may be gathered: He was a man of great general accomplishment, well versed in the literature both of Greece and Rome, devoted to literature and the society of men of letters, a lover of the fine arts and of natural history, a connoisseur of gems and precious stones, fond of living in a grand style, and of surrounding himself with people who amused him, without being always very particular as to who or what they were. For the indulgence of all these tastes, his great wealth was more than sufficient. He reclaimed the Esquiline hill from being the public nuisance we have already described, laid it out in gardens, and in the midst of these built himself a sumptuous palace, where the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore now stands, from which he commanded a superb view of the country looking towards Tivoli. To this palace, salubrious from its spacious size and the elevation of its site, Augustus, when ill, had himself carried from his own modest mansion; and from its lofty belvedere tower Nero is said to have enjoyed the spectacle of Rome in flames beneath him. Voluptuary and dilettante as Mæcenas was, he was nevertheless, like most men of a sombre and melancholy temperament, capable of great exertions; and he veiled under a cold exterior and reserved manners a habit of acute

observation, a kind heart, and, in matters of public concern, a resolute will. This latent energy of character, supported as it was by a subtle knowledge of mankind and a statesmanlike breadth of view, contributed in no small degree to the ultimate triumph of Octavius Cæsar over his rivals, and to the successful establishment of the empire in his hands. When the news of Julius Cæsar's assassination reached the young Octavius, then only nineteen, in Apollonia, it has been said that Mæcenas was in attendance upon him as his governor or tutor. Be this so or not, as soon as Octavius appears in the political arena as his uncle's avenger, Mæcenas is found by his side. In several most important negotiations he acted as his representative. Thus (B.C. 40), the year before Horace was introduced to him, he, along with Cocceius Nerva, negotiated with Antony the peace of Brundusium, which resulted in Antony's ill-starred marriage with Cæsar's sister Octavia. Two years later he was again associated with Cocceius in a similar task, on which occasion Horace and Virgil accompanied him to Brundusium. He appears to have commanded in various expeditions, both naval and military, but it was at Rome and in Council that his services were chiefly sought; and he acted as one of the chief advisers of Augustus down to about five years before his death, when, either from ill health or some other unknown cause, he abandoned political life. More than once he was charged by Augustus with the administration of the civil affairs of Italy during his own absence, intrusted with his seal, and empowered to open all his letters addressed

to the Senate, and, if necessary, to alter their contents, so as to adapt them to the condition of affairs at home. His aim, like that of Vipsanius Agrippa, who was in himself the Nelson and Wellington of the age, seems to have been to build up a united and flourishing empire in the person of Augustus. Whether from temperament or policy, or both, he set his face against the system of cruelty and extermination which disgraced the triumvirate. When Octavius was one day condemning man after man to death, Mæcenas, after a vain attempt to reach him on the tribunal, where he sat surrounded by a dense crowd, wrote upon his tablets, *Surge tandem, Carnifex!*—"Butcher, break off!" and flung them across the crowd into the lap of Cæsar, who felt the rebuke, and immediately quitted the judgment-seat. His policy was that of conciliation; and while bent on the establishment of a monarchy, from what we must fairly assume to have been a patriotic conviction that this form of government could alone meet the exigencies of the time, he endeavoured to combine this with a due regard to individual liberty, and a free expression of individual opinion.

At the time of Horace's introduction to him, Mæcenas was probably at his best, in the full vigour of his intellect, and alive with the generous emotions which must have animated a man bent as he was on securing tranquillity for the state, and healing the strife of factions, which were threatening it with ruin. His chief relaxation from the fatigues of public life was, to all appearance, found in the society of men of letters, and, judging by what Horace says (Satires, I. 9), the *vie*

intime of his social circle must have been charming. To be admitted within it was a privilege eagerly coveted, and with good reason, for not only was this in itself a stamp of distinction, but his parties were well known as the pleasantest in Rome:—

> "No house more free from all that's base,
> In none cabals more out of place.
> It hurts me not, if others be
> More rich, or better read than me;
> Each has his place."

Like many of his contemporaries, who were eminent in political life, Mæcenas devoted himself to active literary work—for he wrote much, and on a variety of topics. His taste in literature was, however, better than his execution. His style was diffuse, affected, and obscure; but Seneca, who tells us this, and gives some examples which justify the criticism, tells us at the same time that his genius was massive and masculine (*grande et virile*), and that he would have been eminent for eloquence, if fortune had not spoiled him. However vicious his own style may have been, the man who encouraged three such writers as Virgil, Propertius, and Horace, not to mention others of great repute, whose works have perished, was clearly a sound judge of a good style in others.

As years went on, and the cares of public life grew less onerous, habits of self-indulgence appear to have grown upon Mæcenas. It will probably be well, however, to accept with some reserve what has been said against him on this head. Then, as now, men of rank

and power were the victims of calumnious gossips and slanderous pamphleteers. His health became precarious. Incessant sleeplessness spoke of an overtasked brain and shattered nerves. Life was full of pain; still he clung to it with a craven-like tenacity. So, at least, Seneca asserts, quoting in support of his statement some very bad verses by Mæcenas, which may be thus translated:—

> "Lame in feet, and lame in fingers,
> Crooked in back, with every tooth
> Rattling in my head, yet, 'sooth,
> I'm content, so life but lingers.
> Gnaw my withers, rack my bones,
> Life, mere life, for all atones."

In one view these lines may certainly be construed to import the same sentiment as the speech of the miserable Claudio in "Measure for Measure,"—

> "The weariest and most loathèd worldly life
> That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
> Can lay on nature, is a paradise
> To what we fear of death."

But, on the other hand, they may quite as fairly be regarded as merely giving expression to the tenet of the Epicurean philosophy, that however much we may suffer from physical pain or inconvenience, it is still possible to be happy. "We know what we are; we know not what we may be!"

Not the least misfortune of Mæcenas was his marriage to a woman whom he could neither live with nor without—separating from and returning to her so often, that,

according to Seneca, he was a thousand times married, yet never had but one wife. Friends he had many, loyal and devoted friends, on whose society and sympathy he leant more and more as the years wore on. He rarely stirred from Rome, loving its smoke, its thronged and noisy streets, its whirl of human passions, as Johnson loved Fleet Street, or "the sweet shady side of Pall Mall," better than all the verdure of Tivoli, or the soft airs and exquisite scenery of Baiæ He liked to read of these things, however; and may have found as keen a pleasure in the scenery of the 'Georgics,' or in Horace's little landscape-pictures, as most men could have extracted from the scenes which they describe.

Such was the man, ushered into whose presence, Horace, the reckless lampooner and satirist, found himself embarrassed, and at a loss for words. Horace was not of the MacSycophant class, who cannot "keep their back straight in the presence of a great man;" nor do we think he had much of the nervous apprehensiveness of the poetic temperament. Why, then, should he have felt thus abashed? Partly, it may have been, from natural diffidence at encountering a man to gain whose goodwill was a matter of no small importance, but whose goodwill, he also knew by report, was not easily won; and partly, to find himself face to face with one so conspicuously identified with the cause against which he had fought, and the men whom he had hitherto had every reason to detest.

Once admitted by Mæcenas to the inner circle of

his friends, Horace made his way there rapidly. Thus we find him, a few months afterwards, in the spring of B.C. 37, going to Brundusium with Mæcenas, who had been despatched thither on a mission of great public importance (Satires, I. 6). The first term of the triumvirate of Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus had expired at the close of the previous year. No fresh arrangement had been made, and Antony, alarmed at the growing power of Octavius in Italy, had appeared off Brundusium with a fleet of 300 sail and a strong body of troops. The Brundusians—on a hint, probably, from Octavius—forbade his landing, and he had to go on to Tarentum, where terms were ultimately arranged for a renewal of the triumvirate. The moment was a critical one, for an open rupture between Octavius and Antony was imminent, which might well have proved disastrous to the former, had Antony joined his fleet to that of the younger Pompey, which, without his aid, had already proved more than a match for the naval force of Octavius.

To judge by Horace's narrative, all the friends who accompanied Mæcenas on this occasion, except his coadjutor, Cocceius Nerva, who had three years before been engaged with him on a similar mission to Brundusium, were men whose thoughts were given more to literature than to politics. Horace starts from Rome with Heliodorus, a celebrated rhetorician, and they make their way very leisurely to Anxur (Terracina), where they are overtaken by Mæcenas.

> "'Twas fixed that we should meet with dear
> Mæcenas and Cocceius here,

Who were upon a mission bound,
Of consequence the most profound;
For who so skilled the feuds to close
Of those, once friends, who now were foes?"

This is the only allusion throughout the poem to the object of the journey. The previous day, Horace had been baulked of his dinner, the water being so bad, and his stomach so delicate, that he chose to fast rather than run the risk of making himself ill with it. And now at Terracina he found his eyes, which were weak, so troublesome, that he had to dose them well with a black wash. These are the first indications we get of habitual delicacy of health, which, if not due altogether to the fatigues and exposure of his campaign with Brutus, had probably been increased by them.

"Meanwhile beloved Mæcenas came,
Cocceius too, and brought with them
Fonteius Capito, a man
Endowed with every grace that can
A perfect gentleman attend,
And Antony's especial friend."

They push on next day to Formiæ, and are amused at Fundi (Fondi) on the way by the consequential airs of the prefect of the place. It would seem as if the peacock nature must break out the moment a man becomes a prefect or a mayor.

"There having rested for the night,
With inexpressible delight
We hail the dawn,—for we that day
At Sinuessa, on our way

With Plotius,* Virgil, Varius too,
Have an appointed rendezvous;
Souls all, than whom the earth ne'er saw
More noble, more exempt from flaw,
Nor are there any on its round
To whom I am more firmly bound.
Oh! what embracings, and what mirth!
Nothing, no, nothing, on this earth,
Whilst I have reason, shall I e'er
With a true genial friend compare!"

Next day they reach Capua, where, so soon as their mules are unpacked, away

"Mæcenas hies, at ball to play;
To sleep myself and Virgil go,
For tennis-practice is, we know,
Injurious, quite beyond all question,
Both to weak eyes and weak digestion."

With these and suchlike details Horace carries us pleasantly on with his party to Brundusium. They were manifestly in no hurry, for they took fourteen days, according to Gibbon's careful estimate, to travel 378 Roman miles. That they might have got over the ground much faster, if necessary, is certain from what is known of other journeys. Cæsar posted 100 miles a-day. Tiberius travelled 200 miles in twenty-four hours, when he was hastening to close the eyes of his brother Drusus; and Statius (Sylv. 14, Carm. 3) talks of a man leaving Rome in the morning, and being at Baiæ or Puteoli, 127 miles off, before night.

* Plotius Tucca, himself a poet, and associated by Virgil with Varius in editing the Æneid after the poet's death.

> "Have but the will, be sure you'll find the way.
> What shall stop him, who starts at break of day
> From sleeping Rome, and on the Lucrine sails
> Before the sunshine into twilight pales?"

Just as, according to Sydney Smith, in his famous allusion to the triumphs of railway travelling, "the early Scotchman scratches himself in the morning mists of the North, and has his porridge in Piccadilly before the setting sun."

Horace treats the expedition to Brundusium entirely as if it had been a pleasant tour. Gibbon thinks he may have done so purposely, to convince those who were jealous of his intimacy with the great statesman, "that his thoughts and occupations on the event were far from being of a serious or political nature." But it was a rule with Horace, in all his writings, never to indicate, by the slightest word, that he knew any of the political secrets which, as the intimate friend of Mæcenas, he could scarcely have failed to know. He hated babbling of all kinds. A man who reported the private talk of friends, even on comparatively indifferent topics,—

> "The churl, who out of doors will spread
> What 'mongst familiar friends is said,"—

(Epistle I. v. 24), was his especial aversion; and he has more than once said, only not in such formal phrase, what Milton puts into the mouth of his "Samson Agonistes,"

> "To have revealed
> Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,

How heinous had the fact been! how deserving
Contempt, and scorn of all, to be excluded
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool set on his front!"

Moreover, reticence, the indispensable quality, not of statesmen merely, but of their intimates, was not so rare a virtue in these days as in our own; and as none would have expected Horace, in a poem of this kind, to make any political confidences, he can scarcely be supposed to have written it with any view to throwing the gossips of Rome off the scent. The excursion had been a pleasant one, and he thought its incidents worth noting. Hence the poem. Happily for us, who get from it most interesting glimpses of some of the familiar aspects of Roman life and manners, of which we should otherwise have known nothing. Here, for example, is a sketch of how people fared in travelling by canal in those days, near Rome. Overcrowding, we see, is not an evil peculiar to our own days.

"Now 'gan the night with gentle hand
To fold in shadows all the land,
And stars along the sky to scatter,
When there arose a hideous clatter,
Slaves slanging bargemen, bargemen slaves;
'Ho, haul up here! how now, ye knaves,
Inside three hundred people stuff?
Already there are quite enough!'
Collected were the fares at last,
The mule that drew our barge made fast,
But not till a good hour was gone.
Sleep was not to be thought upon,

The cursèd gnats were so provoking,
The bull-frogs set up such a croaking.
A bargeman, too, a drunken lout,
And passenger, sang turn about,
In tones remarkable for strength,
Their absent sweethearts, till at length
The passenger began to doze,
When up the stalwart bargeman rose,
His fastenings from the stone unwound,
And left the mule to graze around;
Then down upon his back he lay,
And snored in a terrific way."

Neither is the following allusion to the Jews and their creed without its value, especially when followed, as it is, by Horace's avowal, almost in the words of Lucretius (B. VI. 56), of what was then his own. Later in life he came to a very different conclusion. When the travellers reach Egnatia, their ridicule is excited by being shown or told, it is not very clear which, of incense kindled in the temple there miraculously without the application of fire.

"This may your circumcisèd Jew
Believe, but never I. For true
I hold it that the Deities
Enjoy themselves in careless ease;*
Nor think, when Nature, spurning Law,
Does something which inspires our awe,
'Tis sent by the offended gods
Direct from their august abodes."

So Tennyson, in his "Lotus-Eaters:"—

"Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotus-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind."

See the whole of the passage.

Had Horace known anything of natural science, he might not have gone so far to seek for the explanation of the seeming miracle.

Gibbon speaks contemptuously of many of the incidents recorded in this poem, asking, "How could a man of taste reflect on them the day after?" But the poem has much more than a merely literary interest; thanks to such passages as these, and to the charming tribute by Horace to his friends previously cited.

Nothing can better illustrate the footing of easy friendship on which he soon came to stand with Mæcenas than the following poem, which must have been written before the year B.C. 32; for in that year Terentia became the mistress of the great palace on the Esquiline, and the allusion in the last verse is much too familiar to have been intended for her. Horace, whose delicacy of stomach was probably notorious, had apparently been the victim of a practical joke—a species of rough fun to which the Romans of the upper classes appear to have been particularly prone. It is difficult otherwise to understand how he could have stumbled at Mæcenas's table on a dish so overdosed with garlic as that which provoked this humorous protest. From what we know of the abominations of an ordinary Roman banquet, the vegetable stew in this instance must have reached a climax of unusual atrocity.

"If his old father's throat any impious sinner
Has cut with unnatural hand to the bone,
Give him garlic, more noxious than hemlock, at dinner.
Ye gods! the strong stomachs that reapers must own!

"With what poison is this that my vitals are heated?
By viper's blood—certes, it cannot be less—
Stewed into the potherbs; can I have been cheated?
Or Canidia, did she cook the villainous mess?

"When Medea was struck by the handsome sea-rover,
Who in beauty outshone all his Argonaut band,
This mixture she took to lard Jason all over,
And so tamed the fire-breathing bulls to his hand.

"With this her fell presents she dyed and infected,
On his innocent leman avenging the slight
Of her terrible beauty, forsaken, neglected,
And then on her car, dragon-wafted, took flight.

"Never star on Apulia, the thirsty and arid,
Exhaled a more baleful or pestilent dew,
And the gift, which invincible Hercules carried,
Burned not to his bones more remorselessly through.

"Should you e'er long again for such relish as this is,
Devoutly I'll pray, wag Mæcenas, I vow,
With her hand that your mistress arrest all your kisses,
And lie as far off as the couch will allow."

It is startling to our notions to find so direct a reference as that in the last verse to the "reigning favourite" of Mæcenas; but what are we to think of the following lines, which point unequivocally to Mæcenas's wife, in the following Ode addressed to her husband (Odes, II. 12)?

"Would you, friend, for Phrygia's hoarded gold,
Or all that Achæmenes' self possesses,
Or e'en for what Araby's coffers hold,
Barter one lock of her clustering tresses,

While she stoops her throat to your burning kiss,
Or, fondly cruel, the bliss denies you,
She would have you snatch, or will, snatching this
Herself, with a sweeter thrill surprise you?"

If Mæcenas allowed his friends to write of his wife in this strain, it is scarcely to be wondered at if that coquettish and capricious lady gave, as she did, "that worthy man good grounds for uneasiness."

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLICATION OF FIRST BOOK OF SATIRES. — HIS FRIENDS. — RECEIVES THE SABINE FARM FROM MÆCENAS.

In B.C. 34, Horace published the First Book of his Satires, and placed in front of it one specially addressed to Mæcenas—a course which he adopted in each successive section of his poems, apparently to mark his sense of obligation to him as the most honoured of his friends. The name *Satires* does not truly indicate the name of this series. They are rather didactic poems, couched in a more or less dramatic form, and carried on in an easy conversational tone, without for the most part any definite purpose, often diverging into such collateral topics as suggest themselves by the way, with all the ease and buoyancy of agreeable talk, and getting back or not, as it may happen, into the main line of idea with which they set out. Some of them are conceived in a vein of fine irony throughout. Others, like "The Journey to Brundusium," are mere narratives, relieved by humorous illustrations. But we do not find in them the epigrammatic force, the sternness of moral rebuke, or the scathing spirit of sarcasm, which are commonly

associated with the idea of satire. Literary display appears never to be aimed at. The plainest phrases, the homeliest illustrations, the most everyday topics—if they come in the way—are made use of for the purpose of insinuating or enforcing some useful truth. Point and epigram are the last things thought of; and therefore it is that Pope's translations, admirable as in themselves they are, fail to give an idea of the lightness of touch, the shifting lights and shades, the carelessness alternating with force, the artless natural manner, which distinguish these charming essays. "The terseness of Horace's language in his Satires," it has been well said, "is that of a proverb, neat because homely; while the terseness of Pope is that of an epigram, which will only become homely in time, because it is neat."

In writing these Satires, which he calls merely rhythmical prose, Horace disclaims for himself the title of poet; and at this time it would appear as if he had not even conceived the idea of "modulating Æolic song to the Italian lyre," on which he subsequently rested his hopes of posthumous fame. The very words of his disclaimer, however, show how well he appreciated the poet's gifts (Satires, I. 4):—

"First from the roll I strike myself of those I poets call,
For merely to compose in verse is not the all-in-all;
Nor if a man shall write, like me, things nigh to prose akin,
Shall he, however well he write, the name of poet win?

To genius, to the man whose soul is touched with fire divine,
Whose voice speaks like a trumpet-note, that honoured name assign.
. . . . . 'Tis not enough that you compose your verse
In diction irreproachable, pure, scholarly, and terse,
Which, dislocate its cadence, by anybody may
Be spoken like the language of the father in the play.
Divest those things which now I write, and Lucilius wrote of yore,
Of certain measured cadences, by setting that before
Which was behind, and that before which I had placed behind,
Yet by no alchemy will you in the residuum find
The members still apparent of the dislocated bard,"—

a result which he contends would not ensue, however much you might disarrange the language of a passage of true poetry, such as one he quotes from Ennius, the poetic charm of which, by the way, is not very apparent. Schooled, however, as he had been, in the pure literature of Greece, Horace aimed at a conciseness and purity of style which had been hitherto unknown in Roman satire, and studied, not unsuccessfully, to give to his own work, by great and well-disguised elaboration of finish, the concentrated force and picturesque precision which are large elements in all genuine poetry. His own practice, as we see from its results, is given in the following lines, and a better description of how didactic or satiric poetry should be written could scarcely be desired (Satires, I. 10).

"'Tis not enough, a poet's fame to make,
That you with bursts of mirth your audience shake;
And yet to this, as all experience shows,
No small amount of skill and talent goes.
Your style must be concise, that what you say
May flow on clear and smooth, nor lose its way,
Stumbling and halting through a chaos drear
Of cumbrous words, that load the weary ear;
And you must pass from grave to gay,—now, like
The rhetorician, vehemently strike,
Now, like the poet, deal a lighter hit
With easy playfulness and polished wit,—
Veil the stern vigour of a soul robust,
And flash your fancies, while like death you thrust;
For men are more impervious, as a rule,
To slashing censure than to ridicule.
Here lay the merit of those writers, who
In the Old Comedy our fathers drew;
Here should we struggle in their steps to tread
Whom fop Hermogenes has never read,
Nor that mere ape of his, who all day long
Makes Calvus and Catullus all his song."

The concluding hit at Hermogenes Tigellius and his double is very characteristic of Horace's manner. When he has worked up his description of a vice to be avoided or a virtue to be pursued, he generally drives home his lesson by the mention of some well-known person's name, thus importing into his literary practice the method taken by his father, as we have seen, to impress his ethical teachings upon himself in his youth. The allusion to Calvus and Catullus, the only one anywhere made to these poets by Horace, is curious; but it would be wrong to infer from it, that Horace meant to disparage these fine poets. Calvus had a great reputa-

tion both as an orator and poet. But, except some insignificant fragments, nothing of what he wrote is left. How Catullus wrote we do, however, know; and although it is conceivable that Horace had no great sympathy with some of his love verses, which were probably of too sentimental a strain for his taste, we may be sure that he admired the brilliant genius as well as the fine workmanship of many of his other poems. At all events, he had too much good sense to launch a sneer at so great a poet recently dead, which would not only have been in the worst taste, but might justly have been ascribed to jealousy. When he talks, therefore, of a pair of fribbles who can sing nothing but Calvus and Catullus, it is, as Macleane has said in his note on the passage, "as if a man were to say of a modern English coxcomb, that he could sing Moore's ballads from beginning to end, but could not understand a line of Shakespeare,"—no disparagement to Moore, whatever it might be to the vocalist. Hermogenes and his ape (whom we may identify with one Demetrius, who is subsequently coupled with him in the same satire) were musicians and vocalists, idolised, after the manner of modern Italian singers, by the young misses of Rome. Pampered favourites of fashion, the Farinellis of the hour, their opinion on all matters of taste was sure to be as freely given as it was worthless. They had been, moreover, so indiscreet as to provoke Horace's sarcasm by running down his verses. Leave criticism, he rejoins, to men who have a right to judge. Stick to your proper vocation, and

"To puling girls, that listen and adore,
Your love-lorn chants and woful wailings pour!"

In the same Satire we have proof how warmly Horace thought and spoke of living poets. Thus :—

"In grave Iambic measures Pollio sings
For our delight the deeds of mighty kings.
The stately Epic Varius leads along,
And where is voice so resonant, so strong?
The Muses of the woods and plains have shed
Their every grace and charm on Virgil's head."

With none of those will he compete. Satire is his element, and there he proclaims himself to be an humble follower of his great predecessor. But while he bows to Lucilius as his master, and owns him superior in polish and scholarly grace to the satirists who preceded him, still, he continues—

"Still, were he living now—had only such
Been Fate's decree—he would have blotted much,
Cut everything away that could be called
Crude or superfluous, or tame, or bald;
Oft scratched his head, the labouring poet's trick,
And bitten all his nails down to the quick."

And then he lays down the canon for all high-class composition, which can never be too often enforced :—

"Oh yes, believe me, you must draw your pen
Not once or twice, but o'er and o'er again,
Through what you've written, if you would entice
The man who reads you once to read you twice,
Not making popular applause your cue,
But looking to find audience fit though few. (C.)

He had himself followed the rule, and found the reward. With natural exultation he appeals against

the judgment of men of the Hermogenes type to an array of critics of whose good opinion he might well be proud :—

"Mæcenas, Virgil, Varius,—if I please
In my poor writings these and such as these,—
If Plotius, Valgius, Fuscus will commend,
And good Octavius, I've achieved my end.
You, noble Pollio (let your friend disclaim
All thoughts of flattery, when he names your name),
Messala and his brother, Servius too,
And Bibulus, and Furnius kind and true,
With others, whom, despite their sense and wit,
And friendly hearts, I purposely omit;
Such I would have my critics; men to gain
Whose smiles were pleasure, to forget them pain." (C.)

It is not strange that Horace, even in these early days, numbered so many distinguished men among his friends, for, the question of genius apart, there must have been something particularly engaging in his kindly and affectionate nature. He was a good hater, as all warm-hearted men are; and when his blood was up, he could, like Diggory, "remember his swashing blow." He would fain, as he says himself (Satires, II. 1), be at peace with all men :—

"But he who shall my temper try—
'Twere best to touch me not, say I—
Shall rue it, and through all the town
My verse shall damn him with renown."

But with his friends he was forbearing, devoted, lenient to their foibles, not boring them with his own, liberal in construing their motives, and as trustful in their loyalty to himself as he was assured of his own

to them; clearly a man to be loved—a man pleasant to meet and pleasant to remember, constant, and to be relied on in sunshine or in gloom. Friendship with him was not a thing to be given by halves. He could see a friend's faults—no man quicker—but it did not lie in his mouth to babble about them. He was not one of those who "whisper faults and hesitate dislikes." Love me, love my friend, was his rule. Neither would he sit quietly by, while his friends were being disparaged. And if he has occasion himself to rally their foibles in his poems, he does so openly, and does it with such an implied sympathy and avowal of kindred weakness in himself, that offence was impossible. Above all, he possessed in perfection what Mr Disraeli happily calls "the rare gift of raillery, which flatters the self-love of those whom it seems not to spare." These characteristics are admirably indicated by Persius (I. 116) in speaking of his Satires—

> "Arch Horace, while he strove to mend,
> Probed all the foibles of his smiling friend;
> Played lightly round and round each peccant part,
> And won, unfelt, an entrance to his heart." (Gifford.)

And we may be sure the same qualities were even more conspicuous in his personal intercourse with his friends. Satirist though he was, he is continually inculcating the duty of charitable judgments towards all men.

> "What's done we partly may compute,
> But know not what's resisted,"

is a thought often suggested by his works. The best need large grains of allowance, and to whom should

these be given if not to friends? Here is his creed on this subject (Satires, I. 3) :—

"True love, we know, is blind; defects, that blight
The loved one's charms, escape the lover's sight,
Nay, pass for beauties; as Balbinus shows
A passion for the wen on Agna's nose.
Oh, with our friendships that we did the same,
And screened our blindness under virtue's name!
For we are bound to treat a friend's defect
With touch most tender, and a fond respect;
Even as a father treats a child's, who hints,
The urchin's eyes are roguish, if he squints:
Or if he be as stunted, short, and thick,
As Sisyphus the dwarf, will call him 'chick!'
If crooked all ways, in back, in legs, and thighs,
With softening phrases will the flaw disguise.
So, if one friend too close a fist betrays,
Let us ascribe it to his frugal ways;
Or is another—such we often find—
To flippant jest and braggart talk inclined,
'Tis only from a kindly wish to try
To make the time 'mongst friends go lightly by;
Another's tongue is rough and over-free,
Let's call it bluntness and sincerity;
Another's choleric; him we must screen,
As cursed with feelings for his peace too keen.
This is the course, methinks, that makes a friend,
And, having made, secures him to the end."

What wonder, such being his practice—for Horace in this as in other things acted up to his professions—that he was so dear, as we see he was, to so many of the best men of his time? The very contrast which his life presented to that of most of his associates must have helped to attract them to him. Most of them

were absorbed in either political or military pursuits. Wealth, power, dignity, the splendid prizes of ambition, were the dream of their lives. And even those whose tastes inclined mainly towards literature and art were not exempt from the prevailing passion for riches and display. Rich, they were eager to be more rich; well placed in society, they were covetous of higher social distinction. Now at Rome, gay, luxurious, dissipated; anon in Spain, Parthia, Syria, Africa, or wherever duty, interest, or pleasure called them, encountering perils by land and sea with reckless indifference to fatigue and danger, always with a hunger at their hearts for something, which, when found, did not appease it; they must have felt a peculiar interest in a man who, without apparent effort, seemed to get so much more out of life than they were able to do, with all their struggles, and all their much larger apparent means of enjoyment. They must have seen that wealth and honour were both within his grasp, and they must have known, too, that it was from no lack of appreciation of either that he deliberately declined to seek them. Wealth would have purchased for him many a refined pleasure which he could heartily appreciate, and honours might have saved him from some of the social slights which must have tested his philosophy. But he told them, in every variety of phrase and illustration—in ode, in satire, and epistle—that without self-control and temperance in all things there would be no joy without remorse, no pleasure without fatigue—that it is from within that happiness must come, if it come at all, and that unless the mind

has schooled itself to peace by the renunciation of covetous desires,

> "We may be wise, or rich, or great,
> But never can be blest."

And as he spoke, so they must have seen he lived. Wealth and honours would manifestly have been bought too dearly at the sacrifice of the tranquillity and independence which he early set before him as the objects of his life.

> "The content, surpassing wealth,
> The sage in meditation found;"

the content which springs from living in consonance with the dictates of nature, from healthful pursuits, from a conscience void of offence; the content which is incompatible with the gnawing disquietudes of avarice, of ambition, of social envy,—with that in his heart, he knew he could be true to his genius, and make life worth living for. A man of this character must always be rare; least of all was he likely to be common in Horace's day, when the men in whose circle he was moving were engaged in the great task of crushing the civil strife which had shaken the stability of the Roman power, and of consolidating an empire greater and more powerful than her greatest statesmen had previously dreamed of. But all the more delightful to these men must it have been to come into intimate contact with a man who, while perfectly appreciating their special gifts and aims, could bring them back from the stir and excitement of their habitual life to think of other things than social or political

successes,—to look into their own hearts, and to live for a time for something better and more enduring than the triumphs of vanity or ambition.

Horace from the first seems to have wisely determined to keep himself free from those shackles which most men are so eager to forge for themselves, by setting their heart on wealth and social distinction. With perfect sincerity he had told Mæcenas, as we have seen, that he coveted neither, and he gives his reasons thus (Satires, I. 6) :—

"For then a larger income must be made,
Men's favour courted, and their whims obeyed;
Nor could I then indulge a lonely mood,
Away from town, in country solitude,
For the false retinue of pseudo-friends,
That all my movements servilely attends.
More slaves must then be fed, more horses too,
And chariots bought. Now have I nought to do,
If I would even to Tarentum ride,
But mount my bobtailed mule, my wallets tied
Across his flanks, which, flapping as we go,
With my ungainly ankles to and fro,
Work his unhappy sides a world of weary woe."

From this wise resolution he never swerved, and so through life he maintained an attitude of independence in thought and action which would otherwise have been impossible. He does not say it in so many words, but the sentiment meets us all through his pages, which Burns, whose mode of thinking so often reminds us of Horace, puts into the line,

"My freedom's a lairdship nae monarch may touch."

And we shall hereafter have occasion to see that, when put to the proof, he acted upon this creed. Well might the overworked statesman have envied the poet the ease and freedom of his life, and longed to be able to spend a day as Horace, in the same Satire, tells us his days were passed!—

"I walk alone, by mine own fancy led,
Inquire the price of potherbs and of bread,
The circus cross, to see its tricks and fun,
The forum, too, at times, near set of sun;
With other fools there do I stand and gape
Round fortune-tellers' stalls, thence home escape
To a plain meal of pancakes, pulse, and pease;
Three young boy-slaves attend on me with these.
Upon a slab of snow-white marble stand
A goblet and two beakers; near at hand,
A common ewer, patera, and bowl;
Campania's potteries produced the whole.
To sleep then I. . . . .
I keep my couch till ten, then walk awhile,
Or having read or writ what may beguile
A quiet after-hour, anoint my limbs
With oil, not such as filthy Natta skims
From lamps defrauded of their unctuous fare.
And when the sunbeams, grown too hot to bear,
Warn me to quit the field, and hand-ball play,
The bath takes all my weariness away.
Then, having lightly dined, just to appease
The sense of emptiness, I take mine ease,
Enjoying all home's simple luxury.
This is the life of bard unclogged, like me,
By stern ambition's miserable weight.
So placed, I own with gratitude, my state
Is sweeter, ay, than though a quæstor's power
From sire and grandsire's sires had been my dower."

It would not have been easy to bribe a man of these simple habits and tastes, as some critics have contended that Horace was bribed, to become the laureate of a party to which he had once been opposed, even had Mæcenas wished to do so. His very indifference to those favours which were within the disposal of a great minister of state, placed him on a vantage-ground in his relations with Mæcenas which he could in no other way have secured. Nor, we may well believe, would that distinguished man have wished it otherwise. Surrounded as he was by servility and selfish baseness, he must have felt himself irresistibly drawn towards a nature so respectful, yet perfectly manly and independent, as that of the poet. Nor can we doubt that intimacy had grown into friendship, warm and sincere, before he gratified his own feelings, while he made Horace happy for life, by presenting him with a small estate in the Sabine country—a gift which, we may be sure, he knew well would be of all gifts the most welcome. It is demonstrable that it was not given earlier than B.C. 33, or after upwards of four years of intimate acquaintance. That Horace had longed for such a possession, he tells us himself (Satires, II. 6). He had probably expressed his longing in the hearing of his friend, and to such a friend the opportunity of turning the poet's dream into a reality must have been especially delightful.

The gift was a slight one for Mæcenas to bestow; but, with Horace's fondness for the country, it had a value for him beyond all price. It gave him a competency—*satis superque*—enough and

more than he wanted for his needs. It gave him leisure, health, amusement; and, more precious than all, it secured him undisturbed freedom of thought, and opportunities for that calm intercourse with nature which he "needed for his spirit's health." Never was gift better bestowed, or more worthily requited. To it we are indebted for much of that poetry which has linked the name of Mæcenas with that of the poet in associations the most engaging, and has afforded, and will afford, ever-new delight to successive generations. The Sabine farm was situated in the Valley of Ustica, thirty miles from Rome, and twelve miles from Tivoli. It possessed the attraction, no small one to Horace, of being very secluded—Varia (Vico Varo), the nearest town, being four miles off—yet, at the same time, within an easy distance of Rome. When his spirits wanted the stimulus of society or the bustle of the capital, which they often did, his ambling mule could speedily convey him thither; and when jaded, on the other hand, by the noise and racket and dissipations of Rome, he could, in the same homely way, bury himself within a few hours among the hills, and there, under the shadow of his favourite Lucretilis, or by the banks of the clear-flowing and ice-cold Digentia, either stretch himself to dream upon the grass, lulled by the murmurs of the stream, or do a little farming in the way of clearing his fields of stones, or turning over a furrow here and there with the hoe. There was a rough wildness in the scenery and a sharpness in the air, both of which Horace liked, although, as years advanced and his health grew more delica-

he had to leave it in the colder months for Tivoli or Baiæ. He built a villa upon it, or added to one already there, the traces of which still exist. The farm gave employment to five families of free *coloni*, who were under the superintendence of a bailiff; and the poet's domestic establishment was composed of eight slaves. The site of the farm is at the present day a favourite resort of travellers, of Englishmen especially, who visit it in such numbers, and trace its features with such enthusiasm, that the resident peasantry, "who cannot conceive of any other source of interest in one so long dead and unsainted than that of co-patriotism or consanguinity," believe Horace to have been an Englishman.* What aspect it presented in Horace's time we gather from one of his Epistles (I. 16):—

"About my farm, dear Quinctius: You would know
What sort of produce for its lord 'twill grow;
Plough-land is it, or meadow-land, or soil
For apples, vine-clad elms, or olive-oil?
So (but you'll think me garrulous) I'll write
A full description of its form and site.
In long continuous lines the mountains run,
Cleft by a valley, which twice feels the sun—
Once on the right, when first he lifts his beams;
Once on the left, when he descends in steams.
You'd praise the climate; well, and what d'ye say
To sloes and cornels hanging from the spray?
What to the oak and ilex, that afford
Fruit to the cattle, shelter to their lord?
What, but that rich Tarentum must have been
Transplanted nearer Rome, with all its green?

* Letter by Mr Dennis: Milman's 'Horace.' London, 1849. p. 109.

Then there's a fountain, of sufficient size
To name the river that takes thence its rise—
Not Thracian Hebrus colder or more pure,
Of power the head's and stomach's ills to cure.
This sweet retirement—nay, 'tis more than sweet—
Insures my health even in September's heat." (C.)

Here is what a last year's tourist found it:*—

"Following a path along the brink of the torrent Digentia, we passed a towering rock, on which once stood Vacuna's shrine, and entered a pastoral region of well-watered meadow-lands, enamelled with flowers and studded with chestnut and fruit trees. Beneath their sheltering shade peasants were whiling away the noontide hours. Here sat Daphnis piping sweet witching melodies on a reed to his rustic Phidyle, whilst Lydia and she wove wreaths of wild-flowers, and Lyce sped down to the edge of the stream and brought us cooling drink in a bulging conca borne on her head. Its waters were as deliciously refreshing as they could have been when the poet himself gratefully recorded how often they revived his strength; and one longed to think, and hence half believed, that our homely Hebe, like her fellows, was sprung from the coloni who tilled his fields and dwelt in the five homesteads of which he sings. . . . Near the little village of Licenza, standing like its loftier neighbour, Civitella, on a steep hill at the foot of Lucretilis, we turned off the path, crossed a thickly-wooded knoll, and came to an orchard, in which two young labourers were at work. We asked where the remains of Horace's farm were. '*A piè tui!*' answered the nearest of them, in a dialect more like Latin than Italian. So saying, he began with a shovel to uncover a massive floor in very fair preservation; a little farther on was another, crumbling to pieces. Chaupy has luckily saved one all doubt as to the site of the farm, establishing to our minds convincingly

* 'Pall Mall Gazette,' August 16, 1869.

that it could scarcely have stood on ground other than that on which at this moment we were. As the shovel was clearing the floors, we thought how applicable to Horace himself were the lines he addressed to Fuscus Aristius, 'Naturam expelles,' &c.—

> " 'Drive Nature forth by force, she'll turn and flout
> The false refinements that would keep her out;' (C.)

For here was just enough of his home left to show how nature, creeping on step by step, had overwhelmed his handiwork and reasserted her sway. Again, pure and Augustan in design as was the pavement before us, how little could it vie with the hues and odours of the grasses that bloomed around it!—'Deterius Lybicis' &c.—

> 'Is springing grass less sweet to nose and eyes
> Than Libyan marble's tesselated dyes?' (C.)

" Indeed, so striking were these coincidences that we were as nearly as possible going off on the wrong tack, and singing 'Io Pæan' to Dame Nature herself at the expense of the bard; but we were soon brought back to our allegiance by a sense of the way in which all we saw tallied with the description of him who sang of nature so surpassingly well, who challenges posterity in charmed accents, and could shape the sternest and most concise of tongues into those melodious cadences that invest his undying verse with all the magic of music and all the freshness of youth. For this was clearly the 'angulus iste,' the nook which 'restored him to himself'—this the lovely spot which his steward longed to exchange for the slums of Rome. Below lay the greensward by the river, where it was sweet to recline in slumber. Here grew the vines, still trained, like his own, on the trunks and branches of trees. Yonder the brook which the rain would swell till it overflowed its margin, and his lazy steward and slaves were fain to bank it up; and above, among a wild jumble of hills, lay the

woods where, on the Calends of March, Faunus interposed to save him from the falling tree, and where another miracle preserved him from the attack of the wolf as he strolled along unarmed, singing of the soft voice and sweet smiles of his Lalage! The brook is now nearly dammed up; a wall of close-fitting rough-hewn stones gathers its waters into a still, dark pool; its overflow gushes out in a tiny rill that rushed down beside our path, mingling its murmur with the hum of myriads of insects that swarmed in the air."

On this farm lovers of Horace have been fain to place the fountain of Bandusia, which the poet loved so well, and to which he prophesied, and truly, as the issue has proved, immortality from his song (Odes, III. 13). Charming as the poem is, there could be no stronger proof of the poet's hold upon the hearts of men of all ages than the enthusiasm with which the very site of the spring has been contested.

"Bandusia's fount, in clearness crystalline,
O worthy of the wine, the flowers we vow!
To-morrow shall be thine
A kid, whose crescent brow

"Is sprouting, all for love and victory,
In vain; his warm red blood, so early stirred,
Thy gelid stream shall dye,
Child of the wanton herd.

"Thee the fierce Sirian star, to madness fired,
Forbears to touch; sweet cool thy waters yield
To ox with ploughing tired,
And flocks that range afield.

"Thou too one day shall win proud eminence
'Mid honoured founts, while I the ilex sing

Crowning the cavern, whence
Thy babbling wavelets spring." (C.)

Several commentators maintain, on what appears to be very inconclusive grounds, that the fountain was at Palazzo, six miles from Venusia. But the poem is obviously inspired by a fountain whose babble had often soothed the ear of Horace, long after he had ceased to visit Venusia. On his farm, therefore, let us believe it to exist, whichever of the springs that are still there we may choose to identify with his description. For there are several, and the local guides are by no means dogmatic as to the "*vero fonte*." That known as the "Fonte della Corte" seems to make out the strongest case for itself. It is within a few hundred yards of the villa, most abundant, and in this respect "fit" to name the river that there takes its rise, which the others—at present, at least—certainly are not.

Horace is never weary of singing the praises of his mountain home—"*Satis beatus unicis Sabinis*,"

"With what I have completely blest,
My happy little Sabine nest"—

Odes, II. 18.

are the words in which he contrasts his own entire happiness with the restless misery of a millionaire in the midst of his splendour. Again, in one of his Odes to Mæcenas (III. 16) he takes up and expands the same theme.

"In my crystal stream, my woodland, though its acres are
but few,
And the trust that I shall gather home my crops in season
due,

Lies a joy, which he may never grasp, who rules in gorgeous state
Fertile Africa's dominions. Happier, happier far my fate!
Though for me no bees Calabrian store their honey, nor doth wine
Sickening in the Læstrygonian amphora for me refine;
Though for me no flocks unnumbered, browsing Gallia's pastures fair,
Pant beneath their swelling fleeces, I at least am free from care;
Haggard want with direful clamour ravins never at my door,
Nor wouldst thou, if more I wanted, oh my friend, deny me more.
Appetites subdued will make me richer with my scanty gains,
Than the realms of Alyattes wedded to Mygdonia's plains.
Much will evermore be wanting unto those who much demand;
Blest, whom Jove with what sufficeth dowers, but dowers with sparing hand."

It is the nook of earth which, beyond all others, has a charm for him,—the one spot where he is all his own. Here, as Wordsworth beautifully says, he

"Exults in freedom, can with rapture vouch
For the dear blessings of a lowly couch,
A natural meal, days, months from Nature's hand,
Time, place, and business all at his command."

It is in this delightful retreat that, in one of his most graceful Odes, he thus invites the fair Tyndaris to pay him a visit (I. 17):—

"My own sweet Lucretilis ofttime can lure
From his native Lycæus kind Faunus the fleet,

To watch o'er my flocks, and to keep them secure
From summer's fierce winds, and its rains, and its heat.

"Then the mates of a lord of too pungent a fragrance
Securely through brake and o'er precipice climb,
And crop, as they wander in happiest vagrance,
The arbutus green, and the sweet-scented thyme.

"Nor murderous wolf nor green snake may assail
My innocent kidlings, dear Tyndaris, when
His pipings resound through Ustica's low vale,
Till each mossed rock in music makes answer again.

"The muse is still dear to the gods, and they shield
Me, their dutiful bard; with a bounty divine
They have blessed me with all that the country can yield;
Then come, and whatever I have shall be thine!

"Here screened from the dog-star, in valley retired,
Shalt thou sing that old song thou canst warble so well,
Which tells how one passion Penelope fired,
And charmed fickle Circe herself by its spell.

"Here cups shalt thou sip, 'neath the broad-spreading shade
Of the innocent vintage of Lesbos at ease;
No fumes of hot ire shall our banquet invade,
Or mar that sweet festival under the trees.

"And fear not, lest Cyrus, that jealous young bear,
On thy poor little self his rude fingers should set—
Should pluck from thy bright locks the chaplet, and tear
Thy dress, that ne'er harmed him nor any one yet."

Had Milton this Ode in his thought, when he invited his friend Lawes to a repast,

> "Light and choice,
> Of Attic taste with wine, whence we may rise,
> To hear the lute well touched, and artful voice
> Warble immortal notes, and Tuscan air"?

The reference in the last verse to the violence of the lady's lover—a violence of which ladies of her class were constantly the victims—rather suggests that this Ode, if addressed to a real personage at all, was meant less as an invitation to the Sabine farm than as a balm to the lady's wounded spirit.

In none of his poems is the poet's deep delight in the country life of his Sabine home more apparent than in the following (Satires, II. 6), which, both for its biographical interest and as a specimen of his best manner in his Satires, we give entire :—

"My prayers with this I used to charge,—
A piece of land not very large,
Wherein there should a garden be,
A clear spring flowing ceaselessly,
And where, to crown the whole, there should
A patch be found of growing wood.
All this, and more, the gods have sent,
And I am heartily content.
Oh son of Maia, that I may
These bounties keep is all I pray.
If ne'er by craft or base design
I've swelled what little store is mine,
Nor mean, it ever shall be wrecked
By profligacy or neglect;
If never from my lips a word
Shall drop of wishes so absurd
As,—'Had I but that little nook
Next to my land, that spoils its look!'
Or—'Would some lucky chance unfold
A crock to me of hidden gold,
As to the man whom Hercules
Enriched and settled at his ease,

Who, with the treasure he had found,
Bought for himself the very ground
Which he before for hire had tilled!'
If I with gratitude am filled
For what I have—by this I dare
Adjure you to fulfil my prayer,
That you with fatness will endow
My little herd of cattle now,
And all things else their lord may own,
Except his sorry wits alone,
And be, as heretofore, my chief
Protector, guardian, and relief!
So, when from town and all its ills
I to my perch among the hills
Retreat, what better theme to choose
Than satire for my homely Muse?
No fell ambition wastes me there,
No, nor the south wind's leaden air,
Nor Autumn's pestilential breath,
With victims feeding hungry death.
Sire of the morn, or if more dear
The name of Janus to thine ear,
Through whom whate'er by man is done,
From life's first dawning, is begun
(So willed the gods for man's estate),
Do thou my verse initiate!
At Rome you hurry me away
To bail my friend; 'Quick, no delay,
Or some one—could worse luck befall you?—
Will in the kindly task forestall you.'
So go I must, although the wind
Is north and killingly unkind,
Or snow, in thickly-falling flakes,
The wintry day more wintry makes.
And when, articulate and clear,
I've spoken what may cost me dear,

Elbowing the crowd that round me close,
I'm sure to crush somebody's toes.
'I say, where are you pushing to?
What would you have, you madman, you?'
So flies he at poor me, 'tis odds,
And curses me by all his gods.
'You think that you, now, I daresay,
May push whatever stops your way,
When you are to Mæcenas bound!'
Sweet, sweet, as honey is the sound,
I won't deny, of that last speech,
But then no sooner do I reach
The dusky Esquiline, than straight
Buzz, buzz around me runs the prate
Of people pestering me with cares,
All about other men's affairs.
'To-morrow, Roscius bade me state,
He trusts you'll be in court by eight!'
'The scriveners, worthy Quintus, pray,
You'll not forget they meet to-day,
Upon a point both grave and new,
One touching the whole body, too.'
'Do get Mæcenas, do, to sign
This application here of mine!'
'Well, well, I'll try.' 'You can with ease
Arrange it, if you only please.'
Close on eight years it now must be,
Since first Mæcenas numbered me
Among his friends, as one to take
Out driving with him, and to make
The confidant of trifles, say,
Like this, 'What is the time of day?'
'The Thracian gladiator, can
One match him with the Syrian?'
'These chilly mornings will do harm,
If one don't mind to wrap up warm;'

Such nothings as without a fear
One drops into the chinkiest ear.
Yet all this time hath envy's glance
On me looked more and more askance.
From mouth to mouth such comments run:
'Our friend indeed is Fortune's son.
Why, there he was, the other day,
Beside Mæcenas at the play;
And at the Campus, just before,
They had a bout at battledore.'
Some chilling news through lane and street
Spreads from the Forum. All I meet
Accost me thus—'Dear friend, you're so
Close to the gods, that you must know:
About the Dacians, have you heard
Any fresh tidings? Not a word!'
'You're always jesting!' 'Now may all
The gods confound me, great and small,
If I have heard one word!' 'Well, well,
But you at any rate can tell,
If Cæsar means the lands, which he
Has promised to his troops, shall be
Selected from Italian ground,
Or in Trinacria be found?'
And when I swear, as well I can,
That I know nothing, for a man
Of silence rare and most discreet
They cry me up to all the street.
Thus do my wasted days slip by,
Not without many a wish and sigh,
When, when shall I the country see,
Its woodlands green,—oh, when be free,
With books of great old men, and sleep,
And hours of dreamy ease, to creep
Into oblivion sweet of life,

Its agitations and its strife?*
When on my table shall be seen
Pythagoras's kinsman bean,
And bacon, not too fat, embellish
My dish of greens, and give it relish?
Oh happy nights, oh feasts divine,
When, with the friends I love, I dine
At mine own hearth-fire, and the meat
We leave gives my bluff hinds a treat!
No stupid laws our feasts control,
But each guest drains or leaves the bowl,
Precisely as he feels inclined.
If he be strong, and have a mind
For bumpers, good! if not, he's free
To sip his liquor leisurely.
And then the talk our banquet rouses!
But not about our neighbours' houses,
Or if 'tis generally thought
That Lepos dances well or not?†
But what concerns us nearer, and
Is harmful not to understand,
Whether by wealth or worth, 'tis plain,
That men to happiness attain?

* Many have imitated this passage — none better than Cowley.

"Oh fountains! when in you shall I
Myself, eased of unpeaceful thoughts, espy?
Oh fields! oh woods! when, when shall I be made
The happy tenant of your shade?
Here's the spring-head of pleasure's flood,
Where all the riches be, that she
Has coined and stamped for good."

† How like is this to Tennyson's—

"You'll have no scandal while you dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine,
And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous, under a roof of pine."

By what we're led to choose our friends,—
Regard for them, or our own ends?
In what does good consist, and what
Is the supremest form of that?
And then friend Cervius will strike in
With some old grandam's tale, akin
To what we are discussing. Thus,
If some one have cried up to us
Arellius' wealth, forgetting how
Much care it costs him, 'Look you now,
Once on a time,' he will begin,
'A country mouse received within
His rugged cave a city brother,
As one old comrade would another.
"A frugal mouse upon the whole,
But loved his friend, and had a soul,"
And could be free and open-handed,
When hospitality demanded.
In brief, he did not spare his hoard
Of corn and pease, long coyly stored;
Raisins he brought, and scraps, to boot,
Half-gnawed, of bacon, which he put
With his own mouth before his guest,
In hopes, by offering his best
In such variety, he might
Persuade him to an appetite.
But still the cit, with languid eye,
Just picked a bit, then put it by;
Which with dismay the rustic saw,
As, stretched upon some stubbly straw,
He munched at bran and common grits,
Not venturing on the dainty bits.
At length the town mouse; "What," says he,
"My good friend, can the pleasure be,
Of grubbing here, on the backbone
Of a great crag with trees o'ergrown?

Who'd not to these wild woods prefer
The city, with its crowds and stir?
Then come with me to town; you'll ne'er
Regret the hour that took you there.
All earthly things draw mortal breath;
Nor great nor little can from death
Escape, and therefore, friend, be gay,
Enjoy life's good things while you may,
Remembering how brief the space
Allowed to you in any case."
His words strike home; and, light of heart,
Behold with him our rustic start,
Timing their journey so, they might
Reach town beneath the cloud of night,
Which was at its high noon, when they
To a rich mansion found their way,
Where shining ivory couches vied
With coverlets in purple dyed,
And where in baskets were amassed
The wrecks of a superb repast,
Which some few hours before had closed.
There, having first his friend disposed
Upon a purple tissue, straight
The city mouse begins to wait
With scraps upon his country brother,
Each scrap more dainty than another,
And all a servant's duty proffers,
First tasting everything he offers.
The guest, reclining there in state,
Rejoices in his altered fate,
O'er each fresh tidbit smacks his lips,
And breaks into the merriest quips,
When suddenly a banging door
Shakes host and guest into the floor.
From room to room they rush aghast,
And almost drop down dead at last,

When loud through all the house resounds
The deep bay of Molossian hounds.
"Ho!" cries the country mouse, "this kind
Of life is not for me, I find.
Give me my woods and cavern! There
At least I'm safe! And though both spare
And poor my food may be, rebel
I never will; so, fare ye well!"'"

It is characteristic of Horace that in the very next satire he makes his own servant Davus tell him that his rhapsodies about the country and its charms are mere humbug, and that, for all his ridicule of the shortcomings of his neighbours, he is just as inconstant as they are in his likings and dislikings. The poet in this way lets us see into his own little vanities, and secures the right by doing so to rally his friends for theirs. To his valet, at all events, by his own showing, he is no hero.

"You're praising up incessantly
The habits, manners, likings, ways,
Of people in the good old days;
Yet should some god this moment give
To you the power, like them to live,
You're just the man to say, 'I won't!'
Because in them you either don't
Believe, or else the courage lack,
The truth through thick and thin to back,
And, rather than its heights aspire,
Will go on sticking in the mire.
At Rome you for the country sigh;
When in the country to the sky
You, flighty as the thistle's down,
Are always crying up the town.
If no one asks you out to dine,

Oh, then the *pot-au-feu's* divine!
'You go out on compulsion only—
'Tis so delightful to be lonely;
And drinking bumpers is a bore
You shrink from daily more and more.'
But only let Mæcenas send
Command for you to meet a friend;
Although the message comes so late,
The lamps are being lighted, straight,
'Where's my pommade? Look sharp!' you shout,
'Heavens! is there nobody about?
Are you all deaf?' and, storming high
At all the household, off you fly.
When Milvius, and that set, anon
Arrive to dine, and find you gone,
With vigorous curses they retreat,
Which I had rather not repeat."

Who could take amiss the rebuke of the kindly satirist, who was so ready to show up his own weaknesses? In this respect our own great satirist Thackeray is very like him. Nor is this strange. They had many points in common—the same keen eye for human folly, the same tolerance for the human weaknesses of which they were so conscious in themselves, the same genuine kindness of heart. Thackeray's terse and vivid style, too, is probably in some measure due to this, that to him, as to Malherbe, Horace was a kind of breviary.

CHAPTER V.

LIFE IN ROME.—HORACE'S BORE.—EXTRAVAGANCE OF THE ROMAN DINNERS.

It is one of the many charms of Horace's didactic writings, that he takes us into the very heart of the life of Rome. We lounge with its loungers along the Via Sacra; we stroll into the Campus Martius, where young Hebrus with his noble horsemanship is witching the blushing Neobule, already too much enamoured of the handsome Liparian; and the men of the old school are getting up an appetite by games of tennis, bowls, or quoits; while the young Grecianised fops—lisping feeble jokes—saunter by with a listless contempt for such vulgar gymnastics. We are in the Via Appia. Bariné sweeps along in her chariot in superb toilette, shooting glances from her sleepy cruel eyes. The young fellows are all agaze. What is this? Young Pompilius, not three months married, bows to her, with a visible spasm at the heart, as she hurries by, full in view of his young wife, who hides her mortification within the curtains of her litter, and hastens home to solitude and tears. Here comes Barrus—as ugly a dog as any in Rome—dressed to death; and smiling Malvolio-smiles of self-com-

placency. The girls titter and exchange glances as he passes; Barrus swaggers on, feeling himself an inch taller in the conviction that he is slaughtering the hearts of the dear creatures by the score. A mule, with a dead boar thrown across it, now winds its way among the chariots and litters. A little ahead of it stalks Gargilius, attended by a strong force of retainers armed with spears and nets, enough to thin the game of the Hercynian forest. Little does the mighty hunter dream, that all his friends, who congratulate him on his success, are asking themselves and each other, where he bought the boar, and for how much? Have we never encountered a piscatory Gargilius near the Spey or the Tweed? We wander back into the city and its narrow streets. In one we are jammed into a doorway by a train of builders' waggons laden with huge blocks of stone, or massive logs of timber. Escaping these, we run against a line of undertakers' men, "performing" a voluminous and expensive funeral, to the discomfort of everybody and the impoverishment of the dead man's kindred. In the next street we run the risk of being crushed by some huge piece of masonry in the act of being swung by a crane into its place; and while calculating the chances of its fall with upturned eye, we find ourselves landed in the gutter by an unclean pig, which has darted between our legs at some attractive garbage beyond. This peril over, we encounter at the next turning a mad dog, who makes a passing snap at our toga as he darts into a neighbouring blind alley, whither we do not care to follow his vagaries among a covey

of young Roman street Arabs. Before we reach home a mumping beggar drops before us as we turn the corner, in a well-simulated fit of epilepsy or of helpless lameness. '*Quære peregrinum*'—"Try that game on country cousins,"—we mutter in our beard, and retreat to our lodgings on the third floor, encountering probably on the stair some half-tipsy artisan or slave, who is descending from the attics for another cup of fiery wine at the nearest wine-shop. We go to the theatre. The play is "Ilione," by Pacuvius; the scene a highly sensational one, where the ghost of Deiphobus, her son, appearing to Ilione, beseeches her to give his body burial. "Oh mother, mother," he cries, in tones most raucously tragic, "hear me call!" But the Kynaston of the day who plays Ilione has been soothing his maternal sorrow with too potent Falernian. He slumbers on. The populace, like the gods of our gallery, surmise the truth, and, "Oh! mother, mother, hear me call!" is bellowed from a thousand lungs. We are enjoying a comedy, when our friends the people, "the many-headed monster of the pit," begin to think it slow, and stop the performance with shouts for a show of bears or boxers. Or, hoping to hear a good play, we find the entertainment offered consists of pure spectacle, "inexplicable dumbshow and noise"—

> "Whole fleets of ships in long procession pass,
> And captive ivory follows captive brass." (*C.*)

A milk-white elephant or a camelopard is considered more than a substitute for character, incident,

or wit. And if an actor presents himself in a dress of unusual splendour, the house is in ecstasies, and a roar of applause, loud as a tempest in the Garganian forest, or as the surges on the Tuscan strand, makes the velarium vibrate above their heads. Human nature is perpetually repeating itself. So when Pope is paraphrasing Horace, he has no occasion to alter the facts, which were the same in his pseudo, as in the real, Augustan age, but only to modernise the names :—

"Loud as the waves on Orcas' stormy steep
Howl to the roarings of the Northern deep,
Such is the shout, the long-applauding note,
At Quin's high plume, or Oldfield's petticoat.
Booth enters—hark ! the universal peal.
'But has he spoken ?' Not a syllable.
'What shook the stage, and made the people stare ?'
'Cato's long wig, flowered gown, and lackered chair.'"

We dine out. Mæcenas is of the party, and comes in leaning heavily on the two *umbræ* (guests of his own inviting) whom he has brought with him,—*habitués* of what Augustus called his "parasitical table," who make talk and find buffoonery for him. He is out of spirits to-day, and more reserved than usual, for a messenger has just come in with bad news from Spain, or he has heard of a conspiracy against Augustus, which must be crushed before it grows more dangerous. Varius is there, and being a writer of tragedies, keeps up, as your tragic author is sure to do, a ceaseless fire of puns and pleasantry. At these young Sybaris smiles faintly, for his thoughts are away with his lady-love, the too fascinating Lydia. Horace—who, from

the other side of the table, with an amused smile in his eyes, watches him, as he "sighs like furnace," while Neæra, to the accompaniment of her lyre, sings one of Sappho's most passionate odes—whispers something in the ear of the brilliant vocalist, which visibly provokes a witty repartee, with a special sting in it for Horace himself, at which the little man winces—for have there not been certain love-passages of old between Neæra and himself? The wine circulates freely. Mæcenas warms, and drops, with the deliberation of a rich sonorous voice, now some sharp sarcasm, now some aphorism heavy with meaning, which sticks to the memory, like a saying of Talleyrand's. His *umbræ*, who have put but little of allaying Tiber in their cups, grow boisterous and abusive, and having insulted nearly everybody at the table by coarse personal banter, the party breaks up, and we are glad to get out with flushed cheeks and dizzy head into the cool air of an early summer night—all the more, that for the last half-hour young Piso at our elbow has been importuning us with whispered specimens of his very rickety elegiacs, and trying to settle an early appointment for us to hear him read the first six books of the great Epic with which he means to electrify the literary circles. We reach the Fabrician bridge, meditating as we go the repartees with which we might have turned the tables on those scurrilous followers of the great man, but did not. Suddenly we run up against a gentleman, who, raising his cloak over his head, is on the point of jumping into the Tiber. We seize him by his mantle,

and discover in the intended suicide an old acquaintance, equally well known to the Jews and the bric-a-brac shops, whose tastes for speculation and articles of *vertu* have first brought him to the money-lenders, next to the dogs, and finally to the brink of the yellow Tiber. We give him all the sesterces we have about us, along with a few sustaining aphorisms from our commonplace book upon the folly, if not the wickedness, of suicide, and see him safely home. When we next encounter the decayed *virtuoso*, he has grown a beard (very badly kept), and set up as a philosopher of the hyper-virtuous Jaques school. Of course he lectures us upon every vice which we have not, and every little frailty which we have, with a pointed asperity that upsets our temper for the day, and causes us long afterwards to bewail the evil hour in which we rescued such an ill-conditioned grumbler from the kindly waters of the river.

These hints of life and manners, all drawn from the pages of Horace, might be infinitely extended, and a ramble in the streets of Rome in the present day is consequently fuller of vivid interest to a man who has these pages at his fingers' ends than it can possibly be to any other person. Horace is so associated with all the localities, that one would think it the most natural thing in the world to come upon him at any turning. His old familiar haunts rise up about us out of the dust of centuries. We see a short thick-set man come sauntering along, "more fat than bard beseems." As he passes, lost in reverie, many turn round and look at him. Some point him out to their companions,

and by what they say, we learn that this is Horace, the favourite of Mæcenas, the frequent visitor at the unpretending palace of Augustus, the self-made man and famous poet. He is still within sight, when his progress is arrested. He is in the hands of a bore of the first magnitude. But what ensued, let us hear from his own lips (Satires, I. 9) :—

THE BORE.

It chanced that I, the other day,
Was sauntering up the Sacred Way,
And musing, as my habit is,
Some trivial random fantasies,
That for the time absorbed me quite,
When there comes running up a wight,
Whom only by his name I knew;
"Ha! my dear fellow, how d'ye do?"
Grasping my hand, he shouted. "Why,
As times go, pretty well," said I;
"And you, I trust, can say the same."
But after me as still he came,
"Sir, is there anything," I cried,
"You want of me?" "Oh," he replied,
"I'm just the man you ought to know;—
A scholar, author!" "Is it so?
For this I'll like you all the more!"
Then, writhing to evade the bore,
I quicken now my pace, now stop,
And in my servant's ear let drop
Some words, and all the while I feel
Bathed in cold sweat from head to heel.
"Oh, for a touch," I moaned, in pain,
"Bolanus, of thy madcap vein,
To put this incubus to rout!"
As he went chattering on about

Whatever he descries or meets,
The crowds, the beauty of the streets,
The city's growth, its splendour, size,
"You're dying to be off," he cries;
For all the while I'd been stock dumb.
"I've seen it this half-hour. But come,
Let's clearly understand each other;
It's no use making all this pother.
My mind's made up, to stick by you;
So where you go, there I go, too."
"Don't put yourself," I answered, "pray,
So very far out of your way.
I'm on the road to see a friend,
Whom you don't know, that's near his end,
Away beyond the Tiber far,
Close by where Cæsar's gardens are."
"I've nothing in the world to do,
And what's a paltry mile or two?
I like it, so I'll follow you!"
Down dropped my ears on hearing this,
Just like a vicious jackass's,
That's loaded heavier than he likes;
But off anew my torment strikes.
"If well I know myself, you'll end
With making of me more a friend
Than Viscus, ay, or Varius; for
Of verses who can run off more,
Or run them off at such a pace?
Who dance with such distinguished grace?
And as for singing, zounds!" said he,
"Hermogenes might envy me!"
Here was an opening to break in.
"Have you a mother, father, kin,
To whom your life is precious?" "None;—
I've closed the eyes of every one."
Oh, happy they, I inly groan.
Now I am left, and I alone.

Quick, quick, despatch me where I stand;
Now is the direful doom at hand,
Which erst the Sabine beldam old,
Shaking her magic urn, foretold
In days when I was yet a boy:
"Him shall no poisons fell destroy,
Nor hostile sword in shock of war,
Nor gout, nor colic, nor catarrh.
In fulness of the time his thread
Shall by a prate-apace be shred;
So let him, when he's twenty-one,
If he be wise, all babblers shun."
Now we were close to Vesta's fane,
'Twas hard on ten, and he, my bane,
Was bound to answer to his bail,
Or lose his cause if he should fail.
"Do, if you love me, step aside
One moment with me here!" he cried.
"Upon my life, indeed, I can't,
Of law I'm wholly ignorant,
And you know where I'm hurrying to."
"I'm fairly puzzled what to do.
Give you up, or my cause?" "Oh, me,
Me, by all means!" "I won't!" quoth he;
And stalks on, holding by me tight.
As with your conqueror to fight
Is hard, I follow. "How,"—anon
He rambles off,—"how get you on,
You and Mæcenas? To so few
He keeps himself. So clever, too!
No man more dexterous to seize
And use his opportunities.
Just introduce me, and you'll see,
We'd pull together famously;
And, hang me then, if, with my backing,
You don't send all your rivals packing!"

"Things in that quarter, sir, proceed
In very different style, indeed.
No house more free from all that's base,
In none cabals more out of place.
It hurts me not if others be
More rich, or better read than me.
'Each has his place!' "Amazing tact!
Scarce credible!" "But 'tis the fact."
"You quicken my desire to get
An introduction to his set."
"With merit such as yours, you need
But wish it, and you must succeed.
He's to be won, and that is why
Of strangers he's so very shy."
"I'll spare no pains, no arts, no shifts!
His servants I'll corrupt with gifts.
To-day though driven from his gate,
What matter? I will lie in wait,
To catch some lucky chance; I'll meet
Or overtake him in the street;
I'll haunt him like his shadow. Nought
In life without much toil is bought."
Just at this moment who but my
Dear friend Aristius should come by?
My rattlebrain right well he knew.
We stop. "Whence, friends, and whither to?"
He asks and answers. Whilst we ran
The usual courtesies, I began
To pluck him by the sleeve, to pinch
His arms, that feel but will not flinch,
By nods and winks most plain to see
Imploring him to rescue me.
He, wickedly obtuse the while,
Meets all my signals with a smile.
I, choked with rage, said, "Was there not
Some business, I've forgotten what,

You mentioned, that you wished with me
To talk about, and privately ?"
"Oh, I remember ! Never mind !
Some more convenient time I'll find.
The Thirtieth Sabbath this ! Would you
Affront the circumcisèd Jew ?"
"Religious scruples I have none."
"Ah, but I have. I am but one
Of the *canaille*—a feeble brother.
Your pardon. Some fine day or other
I'll tell you what it was." Oh, day
Of woful doom to me ! Away
The rascal bolted like an arrow,
And left me underneath the harrow;
When, by the rarest luck, we ran
At the next turn against the man,
Who had the lawsuit with my bore.
"Ha, knave !" he cried, with loud uproar,
"Where are you off to ? Will you here
Stand witness ?" I present my ear.
To court he hustles him along;
High words are bandied, high and strong.
A mob collects, the fray to see:
So did Apollo rescue me.

The Satires appear to have been completed when Horace was about thirty-five years old, and published collectively, B.C. 29. By this time his position in society was well assured. He numbered among his friends, as we have seen, the most eminent men in Rome,—

"Chiefs out of war, and statesmen out of place"—

men who were not merely ripe scholars, but who had borne and were bearing a leading part in the great

actions of that memorable epoch. Among such men he would be most at home, for there his wit, his shrewdness, his genial spirits, and high breeding would be best appreciated. But his own keen relish of life, and his delight in watching the lights and shades of human character, took him into that wider circle where witty and notable men are always eagerly sought after to grace the feasts or enliven the heavy splendour of the rich and the unlettered. He was still young, and happy in the animal spirits which make the exhausting life of a luxurious capital endurable even in spite of its pleasures. What Victor Hugo calls

"Le banquet des amis, et quelquefois les soirs,
Le baiser jeune et frais d'une blanche aux yeux noirs,"

never quite lost their charm for him; but during this period they must often have tempted him into the elaborate dinners, the late hours, and the high-strung excitement, which made a retreat to the keen air and plain diet of his Sabine home scarcely less necessary for his body's than it was for his spirit's health. For, much as he prized moderation in all things, and extolled "the mirth that after no repenting draws," good wine, good company, and fair and witty women would be sure to work their spell on a temperament so bright and sympathetic, and to quicken his spirits into a brilliancy and force, dazzling for the hour, but to be paid for next day in headache and depression.

He was all the more likely to suffer in this way

from the very fact that, as a rule, he was simple and frugal in his tastes and habits. We have seen him (p. 66), in the early days of his stay in Rome, at his "plain meal of pancakes, pulse, and pease," served on homely earthenware. At his farm, again, beans and bacon (p. 80) form his staple dish. True to the old Roman taste, he was a great vegetarian, and in his charming ode, written for the opening of the temple of Apollo erected by Augustus on Mount Palatine (B.C. 28), he thinks it not out of place to mingle with his prayer for poetic power an entreaty that he may never be without wholesome vegetables and fruit.

> "Let olives, endive, mallows light,
> Be all my fare; and health
> Give thou, Apollo, so I might
> Enjoy my present wealth!
> Give me but these, I ask no more,
> These, and a mind entire—
> An old age, not unhonoured, nor
> Unsolaced by the lyre!"

Mæcenas himself is promised (Odes, III. 28), if he will visit the poet at the Sabine farm, "simple dinners neatly dressed;" and when Horace invites down his friend Torquatus (Epistles, II. 5), he does it on the footing that this wealthy lawyer shall be content to put up with plain vegetables and homely crockery (*modica olus omne patella*). The wine, he promises, shall be good, though not of any of the crack growths. If Torquatus wants better, he must send it down himself. The appointments of the table, too, though of the simplest kind, shall be admirably kept—

"The coverlets of faultless sheen,
The napkins scrupulously clean,
Your cup and salver such that they
Unto yourself yourself display."

Table-service neat to a nicety was obviously a great point with Horace. What plate he had was made to look its best. "*Ridet argento domus*"—"My plate, newly-burnished, enlivens my rooms"—is one of the attractions held out in his invitation to the fair Phyllis to grace his table on Mæcenas's birthday (Odes, IV. 11). And we may be very sure that his little dinners were served and waited on with the studied care and quiet finish of a refined simplicity. His rule on these matters is indicated by himself (Satires, II. 2):—

"The proper thing is to be cleanly and nice,
And yet so as not to be over precise;
To neither be constantly scolding your slaves,
Like that old prig Albutus, as losels and knaves,
Nor, like Nævius, in such things who's rather too easy,
To the guests at your board present water that's greasy."

To a man of these simple tastes the elaborate banquets, borrowed from the Asiatic Greeks, which were then in fashion, must have been intolerable. He has introduced us to one of them in describing a dinner-party of nine given by one Nasidienus, a wealthy snob, to Mæcenas and others of Horace's friends. The dinner breaks down in a very amusing way, between the giver's love of display and his parsimony, which prompted him, on the one hand, to present his guests

with the fashionable dainties, but, on the other, would not let him pay a price sufficient to secure their being good. The first course consists of a Lucanian wild boar, served with a garnish of turnips, radishes, and lettuce, in a sauce of anchovy-brine and wine-lees. Next comes an incongruous medley of dishes, including one

> "Of sparrows' gall and turbots' liver,
> At the mere thought of which I shiver."

A lamprey succeeds, "floating vast and free, by shrimps surrounded in a sea of sauce," and this is followed up by a crane soused in salt and flour, the liver of a snow-white goose fattened on figs, leverets' shoulders, and roasted blackbirds. This *menu* is clearly meant for a caricature, but it was a caricature of a prevailing folly, which had probably cost the poet many an indigestion.

Against this folly, and the ruin to health and purse which it entailed, some of his most vigorous satire is directed. It furnishes the themes of the second and fourth Satires of the Second Book, both of which, with slight modifications, might with equal truth be addressed to the dinner-givers and diners-out of our own day. In the former of these the speaker is the Apulian yeoman Ofellus, who undertakes to show

> "What the virtue consists in, and why it is great,
> To live on a little, whatever your state."

Before entering on his task, however, he insists that his hearers shall cut themselves adrift from their luxuries, and come to him fasting, and with appetites

whetted by a sharp run with the hounds, a stiff bout at tennis, or some other vigorous gymnastics ;—

"And when the hard work has your squeamishness routed,
When you're parched up with thirst, and your hunger's undoubted,
Then spurn simple food if you can, or plain wine,
Which no honied gums from Hymettus refine."

His homily then proceeds in terms which would not be out of place if addressed to a *gourmet* of modern London or Paris :—

"When your butler's away, and the weather's so bad
That there is not a morsel of fish to be had,
A crust with some salt will soothe not amiss
The ravening stomach. You ask, how is this?
Because for delight, at the best, you must look
To yourself, and not to your wealth or your cook.*
Work till you perspire. Of all sauces 'tis best.
The man that's with over-indulgence oppressed,
White-livered and pursy, can relish no dish,
Be it ortolans, oysters, or finest of fish.
Still I scarcely can hope, if before you there were
A peacock and capon, you would not prefer
With the peacock to tickle your palate, you're so
Completely the dupes of mere semblance and show.
For to buy the rare bird only gold will avail,
And he makes a grand show with his fine painted tail.

* "Pour l'amour de Dieu, un sou pour acheter un petit pain. J'ai si faim !" "Comment !" responded the cloyed sensualist, in search of an appetite, who was thus accosted; "tu as faim, petit drôle ! Tu es bien heureux !" The readers of Pope will also remember his lines on the man who

"Called 'happy dog' the beggar at his door,
And envied thirst and hunger to the poor."

As if this had to do with the matter the least!
Can you make of the feathers you prize so a feast?
And, when the bird's cooked, what becomes of its splendour?
Is his flesh than the capon's more juicy or tender?
Mere appearance, not substance, then, clearly it is,
Which bamboozles your judgment. So much, then, for this."

Don't talk to me of taste, Ofellus continues—

"Will it give you a notion
If this pike in the Tiber was caught, or the ocean?
If it used 'twixt the bridges to glide and to quiver,
Or was tossed to and fro at the mouth of the river?"

Just as our epicures profess to distinguish by flavour a salmon fresh run from the sea from one that has been degenerating for four-and-twenty hours in the fresh water of the river—with this difference, however, that, unlike the salmon with us, the above-bridge pike was considered at Rome to be more delicate than his sea-bred and leaner brother.

Ofellus next proceeds to ridicule the taste which prizes what is set before it for mere size or rarity or cost. It is this, he contends, and not any excellence in the things themselves, which makes people load their tables with the sturgeon or the stork. Fashion, not flavour, prescribes the rule; indeed, the more perverted her ways, the more sure they are to be followed.

"So were any one now to assure us a treat
In cormorants roasted, as tender and sweet,
The young men of Rome are so prone to what's wrong,
They'd eat cormorants all to a man, before long."

But, continues Ofellus, though I would have you frugal, I would not have you mean—

> "One vicious extreme it is idle to shun,
> If into its opposite straightway you run;"

illustrating his proposition by one of those graphic sketches which give a distinctive life to Horace's Satires.

"There is Avidienus, to whom, like a burr,
Sticks the name he was righteously dubbed by, of 'Cur,'
Eats beechmast and olives five years old, at least,
And even when he's robed all in white for a feast
On his marriage or birth day, or some other very
High festival day, when one likes to be merry,
What wine from the chill of his cellar emerges—
'Tis a drop at the best—has the flavour of verjuice;
While from a huge cruet his own sparing hand
On his coleworts drops oil which no mortal can stand,
So utterly loathsome and rancid in smell, it
Defies his stale vinegar even to quell it."

Let what you have be simple, the best of its kind, whatever that may be, and served in the best style. And now learn, continues the rustic sage,

> "In what way and how greatly you'll gain
> By using a diet both sparing and plain.
> First, your health will be good; for you readily can
> Believe how much mischief is done to a man
> By a great mass of dishes,—remembering that
> Plain fare of old times, and how lightly it sat.
> But the moment you mingle up boiled with roast meat,
> And shellfish with thrushes, what tasted so sweet
> Will be turned into bile, and ferment, not digest, in
> Your stomach exciting a tumult intestine.

Mark, from a bewildering dinner how pale
Every man rises up! Nor is this all they ail,
For the body, weighed down by its last night's excesses,
To its own wretched level the mind, too, depresses,
And to earth chains that spark of the essence divine;
While he, that's content on plain viands to dine,
Sleeps off his fatigues without effort, then gay
As a lark rises up to the tasks of the day.
Yet he on occasion will find himself able
To enjoy without hurt a more liberal table,
Say, on festival days, that come round with the year,
Or when his strength's low, and cries out for good cheer,
Or when, as years gather, his age must be nursed
With more delicate care than he wanted at first.
But for you, when ill health or old age shall befall,
Where's the luxury left, the relief within call,
Which has not been forestalled in the days of your prime,
When you scoffed, in your strength, at the inroads of time?
"'Keep your boar till it's rank!' said our sires; which arose,
I am confident, not from their having no nose,
But more from the notion that some of their best
Should be kept in reserve for the chance of a guest:
And though, ere he came, it grew stale on the shelf,
This was better than eating all up by one's self.
Oh, would I had only on earth found a place
In the days of that noble heroic old race!"

So much as a question of mere health and good feeling. But now our moralist appeals to higher considerations:—

"Do you set any store by good name, which we find
Is more welcome than song to the ears of mankind?
Magnificent turbot, plate richly embossed,
Will bring infinite shame with an infinite cost.

Add kinsmen and neighbours all furious, your own
Disgust with yourself, when you find yourself groan
For death, which has shut itself off from your hope,
With not even a sou left to buy you a rope.
"'Most excellent doctrine!' you answer, 'and would,
For people like Trausius, be all very good;
But I have great wealth, and an income that brings
In enough to provide for the wants of three kings.'
But is this any reason you should not apply
Your superfluous wealth to ends nobler, more high?
You so rich, why should any good honest man lack?
Our temples, why should they be tumbling to wrack?
Wretch, of all this great heap have you nothing to spare
For our dear native land? Or why should you dare
To think that misfortune will never o'ertake you?
Oh, then, what a butt would your enemies make you!
Who will best meet reverses? The man who, you find,
Has by luxuries pampered both body and mind?
Or he who, contented with little, and still
Looking on to the future, and fearful of ill,
Long, long ere a murmur is heard from afar,
In peace has laid up the munitions of war?"

Alas for the wisdom of Ofellus the sage! Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and the spectacle is still before us of the same selfishness, extravagance, and folly, which he rebuked so well and so vainly, but pushed to even greater excess, and more widely diffused, enervating the frames and ruining the fortunes of one great section of society, and helping to inspire another section, and that a dangerous one, with angry disgust at the hideous contrast between the opposite extremes of wretchedness and luxury which everywhere meets the eye in the great cities of the civilised world.

In the fourth Satire of the Second Book, Horace

ridicules, in a vein of exquisite irony, the *gourmets* of his day, who made a philosophy of flavours, with whom sauces were a science, and who had condensed into aphorisms the merits of the poultry, game, or fish of the different and often distant regions from which they were brought to Rome. Catius has been listening to a dissertation by some Brillât-Savarin of this class, and is hurrying home to commit to his tablets the precepts by which he professes himself to have been immensely struck, when he is met by Horace, and prevailed upon to repeat some of them in the very words of this philosopher of the dinner-table. Exceedingly curious they are, throwing no small light both upon the materials of the Roman cuisine and upon the treatment by the Romans of their wines. Being delivered, moreover, with the epigrammatic precision of philosophical axioms, their effect is infinitely amusing. Thus :—

> "Honey Anfidius mixed with strong
> Falernian ; he was very wrong."
>
> "The flesh of kid is rarely fine,
> That has been chiefly fed on vine."
>
> "To meadow mushrooms give the prize,
> And trust no others, if you're wise."
>
> "Till I had the example shown,
> The art was utterly unknown
> Of telling, when you taste a dish,
> The age and kind of bird or fish."

Horace professes to be enraptured at the depth of sagacity and beauty of expression in what he hears, and exclaims,—

"Oh, learned Catius, prithee, by
Our friendship, by the gods on high,
Take me along with you, to hear
Such wisdom, be it far or near!
For though you tell me all—in fact,
Your memory is most exact—
Still there must be some grace of speech,
Which no interpreter can reach.
The look, too, of the man, the mien!
Which you, what fortune! having seen,
May for that very reason deem
Of no account; but to the stream,
Even at its very fountain-head,
I fain would have my footsteps led,
That, stooping, I may drink my fill,
Where such life-giving saws distil."

Manifestly the poet was no gastronome, or he would not have dealt thus sarcastically with matters so solemn and serious as the gusts, and flavours, and "sacred rage" of a highly-educated appetite. At the same time, there is no reason to suppose him to have been insensible to the attractions of the "*haute cuisine*," as developed by the genius of the Vattel or Francatelli of Mæcenas, and others of his wealthy friends. Indeed, he appears to have been prone, rather than otherwise, to attack these with a relish, which his feeble digestion had frequent reason to repent. His servant Davus more than hints as much in the passage above quoted (p. 83); and the consciousness of his own frailty may have given additional vigour to his assaults on the ever-increasing indulgence in the pleasures of the table, which he saw gaining ground so rapidly around him.

CHAPTER VI.

HORACE'S LOVE POETRY.

When young, Horace threw himself ardently into the pleasures of youth; and his friends being, for the most part, young and rich, their banquets were sure to be sumptuous, and carried far into the night. Nor in these days did the "*blanche aux yeux noirs*," whose beauty and accomplishments formed the crowning grace of most bachelors' parties, fail to engage a liberal share of his attention. He tells us as much himself (Epistles, I. 14), when contrasting to the steward of his farm the tastes of his maturer years with the habits of his youth.

> "He, whom fine clothes became, and glistering hair,
> Whom Cinara welcomed, that rapacious fair,
> As well you know, for his own simple sake,
> Who on from noon would wine in bumpers take,
> Now quits the table soon, and loves to dream
> And drowse upon the grass beside a stream,"

adding, with a sententious brevity which it is hopeless to imitate, "*Nec lusisse pudet, sed non incidere ludum,*—

"Nor blushes that of sport he took his fill;
He'd blush, indeed, to be tomfooling still."

Again, when lamenting how little the rolling years have left him of his past (Epistles, II. 2), his regrets are for the "*Venerem, convivia, ludum*," to which he no longer finds himself equal—

"Years following years steal something every day,
Love, feasting, frolic, fun, they've swept away;"—

and to the first of these, life "in his hot youth" manifestly owed much of its charm.

To beauty he would appear to have been always susceptible, but his was the lightly-stirred susceptibility which is an affair of the senses rather than of the soul. "There is in truth," says Rochefoucauld, "only one kind of love; but there are a thousand different copies of it." Horace, so far at least as we can judge from his poetry, was no stranger to the spurious form of the passion, but his whole being had never been penetrated by the genuine fire. The goddess of his worship is not Venus Urania, pale, dreamy, spiritual, but *Erycina ridens, quam Jocus circum volat et Cupido*, who comes

"With laughter in her eyes, and Love
And Glee around her flying."

Accordingly, of all those infinitely varied chords of deep emotion and imaginative tenderness, of which occasional traces are to be found in the literature of antiquity, and with which modern poetry, from Dante to Tennyson, is familiar, no hint is to be found in his

pages. His deepest feeling is at best but a ferment of the blood; it is never the all-absorbing devotion of the heart. He had learned by his own experience just enough of the tender passion to enable him to write pretty verses about it, and to rally, not unsympathetically, such of his friends as had not escaped so lightly from the flame. Therefore it is that, as has been truly said, "his love-ditties are, as it were, like flowers, beautiful in form and rich in hues, but without the scent that breathes to the heart." We seek in them in vain for the tenderness, the negation of self, the passion and the pathos, which are the soul of all true love-poetry.

At the same time, Horace had a subtle appreciation of the beauty and grace, the sweetness and the fascination, of womanhood. Poet as he was, he must have delighted to contemplate the ideal elevation and purity of woman, as occasionally depicted in the poetry of Greece, and of which he could scarcely fail to have had some glimpses in real life. Nay, he paints (Odes, III. 11) the devotion of Hypermnestra for her husband's sake "magnificently false" (*splendide mendax*) to the promise which, with her sister Danaids, she had given to her father, in a way that proves he was not incapable of appreciating, and even of depicting, the purer and higher forms of female worth. But this exquisite portrait stands out in solitary splendour among the Lydes and Lalages, the Myrtales, Phrynes, and Glyceras of his other poems. These ladies were types of the class with which, probably, he was most familiar, those brilliant and accomplished *hetairæ*,

generally Greeks, who were trained up in slavery with every art and accomplishment which could heighten their beauty or lend a charm to their society. Always beautiful, and by force of their very position framed to make themselves attractive, these "weeds of glorious feature," naturally enough, took the chief place in the regards of men of fortune, in a state of society where marriage was not an affair of the heart but of money or connection, and where the wife so chosen seems to have been at pains to make herself more attractive to everybody rather than to her husband. Here and there these Aspasias made themselves a distinguished position, and occupied a place with their protector nearly akin to that of wife. But in the ordinary way their reign over any one heart was shortlived, and their career, though splendid, was brief,—a youth of folly, a premature old age of squalor and neglect. Their habits were luxurious and extravagant. In dress they outvied the splendour, not insignificant, of the Roman matrons; and they might be seen courting the admiration of the wealthy loungers of Rome by dashing along the Appian Way behind a team of spirited ponies driven by themselves. These things were often paid for out of the ruin of their admirers. Their society, while in the bloom and freshness of their charms, was greatly sought after, for wit and song came with them to the feast. Even Cicero, then well up in years, finds a pleasant excuse (Familiar Letters, IX. 26) for enjoying till a late hour the society of one Cytheris, a lady of the class, at the house of Volumnius Eutrapelus, her protector. His friend

Atticus was with him; and although Cicero finds some excuse necessary, it is still obvious that even grave and sober citizens might dine in such equivocal company without any serious compromise of character.

It was perhaps little to be wondered at that Horace did not squander his heart upon women of this class. His passions were too well controlled, and his love of ease too strong, to admit of his being carried away by the headlong impulses of a deeply-seated devotion. This would probably have been the case even had the object of his passion been worthy of an unalloyed regard. As it was,

> "His loves were like most other loves,
> A little glow, a little shiver;"

and if he sometimes had, like the rest of mankind, to pay his homage to the universal passion by "sighing upon his midnight pillow" for the regards of a mistress whom he could not win, or who had played him false, he was never at a loss to find a balm for his wounds elsewhere. He was not the man to nurse the bitter-sweet sorrows of the heart—to write, and to feel, like Burns—

> "'Tis sweeter for thee despairing,
> Than aught in the world beside."

Parabilem amo Venerem facilemque, "Give me the beauty that is not too coy," is the Alpha and Omega of his personal creed. How should it have been otherwise? Knowing woman chiefly, as he obviously did, only in the ranks of the *demi-monde*, he was not

likely to regard the fairest face, after the first heyday of his youth was past, as worth the pain its owner's caprices could inflict. For, as seen under that phase, woman was apt to be both mercenary and capricious; and if the poet suffered, as he did, from the fickleness of more than one mistress, the probability is—and this he was too honest not to feel—that they had only forestalled him in inconstancy.

If Horace ever had a feeling which deserved the name of love, it was for the Cinara mentioned in the lines above quoted. She belonged to the class of hetairæ, but seems to have preferred him, from a genuine feeling of affection, to her wealthier lovers. Holding him as she did completely under her thraldom, it was no more than natural that she should have played with his emotions, keeping him between ecstasy and torture, as such a woman, especially if her own heart were also somewhat engaged, would delight to do with a man in whose love she must have rejoiced as something to lean upon amid the sad frivolities of her life. The exquisite pain to which her caprices occasionally subjected him was more than he could bear in silence, and drove him, despite his quick sense of the ridiculous, into lachrymose avowals to Mæcenas of his misery over his wine, which were, doubtless, no small source of amusement to the easy-going statesman, before his wife Terentia had taught him by experience what infinite torture a charming and coquettish woman has it in her power to inflict. Long years afterwards, when he is well on to fifty, Horace reminds his friend (Epistles, I. 7) of

"The woes blabbed o'er our wine, when Cinara chose
To tease me, cruel flirt—ah, happy woes!"—

words in which lurks a subtle undercurrent of pathos, like that in Sophie Arnould's exclamation in Le Brun's Epigram,—

"Oh, le bon temps! J'etais bien malheureuse!"

Twice also in his later odes (IV. 1 and 13), Horace recurs with tenderness to the "gentle Cinara" as having held the paramount place in his heart. She was his one bit of romance, and this all the more that she died young. *Cinaræ breves annos fata dederunt*—"Few years the fates to Cinara allowed;" and in his meditative rambles by the Digentia, the lonely poet, we may well believe, often found himself sighing "for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still."

In none of his love-poems is the ring of personal feeling more perceptible than in the following. It is one of his earliest, and if we are to identify the Næra to whom it is addressed with the Næra referred to in Ode 14, Book III., it must have been written *Consule Planco*, that is, in the year of Horace's return to Rome after the battle of Philippi.—

"'Twas night!—let me recall to thee that night!
The silver moon in the unclouded sky
Amid the lesser stars was shining bright,
When, in the words I did adjure thee by,
Thou with thy clinging arms, more tightly knit
Around me than the ivy clasps the oak,
Didst breathe a vow—mocking the gods with it—
A vow which, false one, thou has foully broke;

That while the ravening wolf should hunt the flocks,
The shipman's foe, Orion, vex the sea,
And zephyrs waft the unshorn Apollo's locks,
So long wouldst thou be fond, be true to me!

"Yet shall thy heart, Næera, bleed for this,
For if in Flaccus aught of man remain,
Give thou another joys that once were his,
Some other maid more true shall soothe his pain;
Nor think again to lure him to thy heart!
The pang once felt, his love is past recall;
And thou, more favoured youth, whoe'er thou art,
Who revell'st now in triumph o'er his fall,
Though thou be rich in land and golden store,
In lore a sage, with shape framed to beguile,
Thy heart shall ache when, this brief fancy o'er,
She seeks a new love, and I calmly smile."

This is the poetry of youth, the passion of wounded vanity; but it is clearly the product of a strong personal feeling—a feeling which has more often found expression in poetry than the higher emotions of those with whom "love is love for evermore," and who have infinite pity, but no rebuke, for faithlessness. The lines have been often imitated; and in Sir Robert Aytoun's poem on "Woman's Inconstancy," the imitation has a charm not inferior to the original.

"Yet do thou glory in thy choice,
Thy choice of his good fortune boast;
I'll neither grieve nor yet rejoice
To see him gain what I have lost;
The height of my disdain shall be
To laugh at him, to blush for thee;
To love thee still, yet go no more
A-begging to a beggar's door."

Note how Horace deals with the same theme in his Ode to Pyrrha, famous in Milton's overrated translation, and the difference between the young man writing under the smart of wounded feeling and the poet, calmly though intensely elaborating his subject as a work of art, becomes at once apparent.

"Pyrrha, what slender boy, in perfume steeped,
Doth in the shade of some delightful grot
Caress thee now on couch with roses heaped?
For whom dost thou thine amber tresses knot

"With all thy seeming-artless grace? Ah me,
How oft will he thy perfidy bewail,
And joys all flown, and shudder at the sea
Rough with the chafing of the blust'rous gale,

"Who now, fond dreamer, revels in thy charms;
Who, all unweeting how the breezes veer,
Hopes still to find a welcome in thine arms
As warm as now, and thee as loving-dear!

"Ah, woe for those on whom thy spell is flung!
My votive tablet, in the temple set,
Proclaims that I to ocean's god have hung
The vestments in my shipwreck smirched and wet."

It may be that among Horace's odes some were directly inspired by the ladies to whom they are addressed; but it is time that modern criticism should brush away all the elaborate nonsense which has been written to demonstrate that Pyrrha, Chloe, Lalage, Lydia, Lyde, Leuconoë, Tyndaris, Glycera, and Barine, not to mention others, were real personages to whom the poet was attached. At this rate his occupations

must have rather been those of a Don Giovanni than of a man of studious habits and feeble health, who found it hard enough to keep pace with the milder dissipations of the social circle. We are absolutely without any information as to these ladies, whose liquid and beautiful names are almost poems in themselves; nevertheless the most wonderful romances have been spun about them out of the inner consciousness of the commentators. Who would venture to deal in this way with the Eleanore, and "rare pale Margaret," and Cousin Amy, of Mr Tennyson? And yet to do so would be quite as reasonable as to conclude, as some critics have done, that such a poem as the following (Odes, I. 23) was not a graceful poetical exercise merely, but a serious appeal to the object of a serious passion:—

"Nay, hear me, dearest Chloe, pray!
You shun me like a timid fawn,
That seeks its mother all the day
By forest brake and upland lawn,
Of every passing breeze afraid,
And leaf that twitters in the glade.

"Let but the wind with sudden rush
The whispers of the wood awake,
Or lizard green disturb the hush,
Quick-darting through the grassy brake,
The foolish frightened thing will start,
With trembling knees and beating heart.*

* The same idea has been beautifully worked out by Spenser, in whom, and in Milton, the influence of Horace's poetry is perhaps more frequently traceable than in any of our poets:—

"Like as an hynde forth singled from the herde,
That hath escaped from a ravenous beast,

"But I am neither lion fell
Nor tiger grim to work you woe;
I love you, sweet one, much too well,
Then cling not to your mother so,
But to a lover's fonder arms
Confide your ripe and rosy charms."

Such a poem as this, one should have supposed, might have escaped the imputation of being dictated by mere personal desire. But no; even so acute a critic as Walckenaer will have it that Chloe was one of Horace's many mistresses, to whom he fled for consolation when Lydia, another of them, played him false, "et qu'il l'a recherchée avec empressement." And his sole ground for this conclusion is the circumstance that a Chloe is mentioned in this sense in the famous Dialogue, in which Horace and Lydia have quite gratuitously been assumed to be the speakers. That is to say, he first assumes that the dialogue is not a mere exercise of fancy, but a serious fact, and, having got so far, concludes as a matter of course that the Chloe of the one ode is the Chloe of the other! "The ancients," as Buttmann has well said, "had the skill to construct such poems so that each speech tells us by whom it is spoken; but we let the editors treat us all our lives as school-

Yet flies away, of her own feet afeard;
And every leaf, that shaketh with the least
Murmure of winde, her terror hath encreast;
So fled fayre Florimel from her vaine feare,
Long after she from perill was releast;
Each shade she saw, and each noyse she did heare,
Did seeme to be the same, which she escaypt whileare."
—Fairy Queen, III. vii. 1.

boys, and interline such dialogues, as we do our plays, with the names. Even in an English poem we should be offended at seeing Collins by the side of Phyllis." Read without the prepossession which the constant mention of it as a dialogue between Horace and Lydia makes it difficult to avoid, the Ode commends itself merely as a piece of graceful fancy. Real feeling is the last thing one looks for in two such excessively well-bred and fickle personages as the speakers. Their pouting and reconciliation make very pretty fooling, such as might be appropriate in the wonderful beings who people the garden landscapes of Watteau. But where are the fever and the strong pulse of passion which, in less ethereal mortals, would be proper to such a theme? Had there been a real lady in the case, the tone would have been less measured, and the strophes less skilfully balanced.

"HE.—Whilst I was dear and thou wert kind,
And I, and I alone, might lie
Upon thy snowy breast reclined,
Not Persia's king so blest as I.

SHE.—Whilst I to thee was all in all,
Nor Chloë might with Lydia vie,
Renowned in ode or madrigal,
Not Roman Ilia famed as I.

HE.—I now am Thracian Chloë's slave,
With hand and voice that charms the air,
For whom even death itself I'd brave,
So fate the darling girl would spare!

SHE.—I dote on Calaïs—and I
Am all his passion, all his care,
For whom a double death I'd die,
So fate the darling boy would spare!

HE.—What, if our ancient love return,
And bind us with a closer tie,
If I the fair-haired Chloë spurn,
And as of old, for Lydia sigh?

SHE.—Though lovelier than yon star is he,
And lighter thou than cork—ah why?
More churlish, too, than Adria's sea,
With thee I'd live, with thee I'd die!"

In this graceful trifle Horace is simply dealing with one of the commonplaces of poetry, most probably only transplanting a Greek flower into the Latin soil. There is more of the vigour of originality and of living truth in the following ode to Bariné (II. 8), where he gives us a cameo portrait, carved with exquisite finish, of that *beauté de diable*, "dallying and dangerous," as Charles Lamb called Peg Woffington's, and, what hers was not, heartless, which never dies out of the world. A real person, Lord Lytton thinks, "was certainly addressed, and in a tone which, to such a person, would have been the most exquisite flattery; and as certainly the person is not so addressed by a lover" —a criticism which, coming from such an observer, outweighs the opposite conclusions of a score of pedantic scholars:—

"If for thy perjuries and broken truth,
Bariné, thou hadst ever come to harm,
Hadst lost, but in a nail or blackened tooth,
One single charm,

"I'd trust thee; but when thou art most forsworn,
Thou blazest forth with beauty most supreme,
And of our young men art, noon, night, and morn,
The thought, the dream.

"To thee 'tis gain thy mother's dust to mock,
To mock the silent watchfires of the night,
All heaven, the gods, on whom death's icy shock
Can never light.

"Smiles Venus' self, I vow, to see thy arts,
The guileless Nymphs and cruel Cupid smile,
And, smiling, whets on bloody stone his darts
Of fire the while.

"Nay more, our youth grow up to be thy prey,
New slaves throng round, and those who crouched at first,
Though oft they threaten, leave not for a day
Thy roof accurst.

"Thee mothers for their unfledged younglings dread;
Thee niggard old men dread, and brides new-made,
In misery, lest their lords neglect their bed,
By thee delayed."

Horace is more at home in playful raillery of the bewildering effects of love upon others, than in giving expression to its emotions as felt by himself. In the fourteenth Epode, it is true, he begs Mæcenas to excuse his failure to execute some promised poem, because he is so completely upset by his love for a certain naughty Phryne that he cannot put a couple of lines together. Again, he tells us (Odes, I. 19) into what a ferment his whole being has been thrown, long after he had thought himself safe from such

emotions, by the marble-like sheen of Glycera's beauty —her *gratæ protervitas, et voltus nimium lubricus adspici*—

> "Her pretty, pert, provoking ways,
> And face too fatal-fair to see."

The first Ode of the Fourth Book is a beautiful fantasia on a similar theme. He paints, too, the tortures of jealousy with the vigour (Odes, I. 13) of a man who knew something of them :—

> "Then reels my brain, then on my cheek
> The shifting colour comes and goes,
> And tears, that flow unbidden, speak
> The torture of my inward throes,
> The fierce unrest, the deathless flame,
> That slowly macerates my frame."

And when rallying his friend Tibullus (Odes, I. 23) about his doleful ditties on the fickleness of his mistress Glycera, he owns to having himself suffered terribly in the same way. But despite all this, it is very obvious that if love has, in Rosalind's phrase, "clapped him on the shoulder," the little god left him "heart-whole." Being, as it is, the source of the deepest and strongest emotions, love presents many aspects for the humorist, and perhaps to no one more than to him who has felt it intensely. Horace may or may not have sounded the depths of the passion in his own person ; but, in any case, a fellow-feeling for the lover's pleasures and pains served to infuse a tone of kindliness into his ridicule. How charming in this way is the Ode to Lydia (I. 8), of which the late Henry Luttrel's

once popular and still delightful 'Letters to Julia' is an elaborate paraphrase!—

"Why, Lydia, why,
I pray, by all the gods above,
Art so resolved that Sybaris should die,
And all for love?

"Why doth he shun
The Campus Martius' sultry glare?
He that once recked of neither dust nor sun,
Why rides he there,

"First of the brave,
Taming the Gallic steed no more?
Why doth he shrink from Tiber's yellow wave?
Why thus abhor

"The wrestlers' oil,
As 'twere from viper's tongue distilled?
Why do his arms no livid bruises soil,
He, once so skilled,

"The disc or dart
Far, far beyond the mark to hurl?
And tell me, tell me, in what nook apart,
Like baby-girl,

"Lurks the poor boy,
Veiling his manhood, as did Thetis' son,
To 'scape war's bloody clang, while fated Troy
Was yet undone?"

In the same class with this poem may be ranked the following ode (I. 27). Just as the poet has made us as familiar with the lovelorn Sybaris as if we knew him, so does he here transport us into the middle

of a wine-party of young Romans, with that vivid dramatic force which constitutes one great source of the excellence of his lyrics.

"Hold! hold! 'Tis for Thracian madmen to fight
With wine-cups, that only were made for delight.
'Tis barbarous—brutal! I beg of you all,
Disgrace not our banquet with bloodshed and brawl!

"Sure, Median scimitars strangely accord
With lamps and with wine at the festival board!
'Tis out of all rule! Friends, your places resume,
And let us have order once more in the room!

"If I am to join you in pledging a beaker
Of this stout Falernian, choicest of liquor,
Megilla's fair brother must say, from what eyes
Flew the shaft, sweetly fatal, that causes his sighs.

"How—dumb! Then I drink not a drop. Never blush,
Whoever the fair one may be, man! Tush, tush!
She'll do your taste credit, I'm certain—for yours
Was always select in its little amours.

"Don't be frightened! We're all upon honour, you know,
So out with your tale!—Gracious powers! Is it so?
Poor fellow! Your lot has gone sadly amiss,
When you fell into such a Charybdis as this!

"What witch, what magician, with drinks and with charms,
What god can effect your release from her harms?
So fettered, scarce Pegasus' self, were he near you,
From the fangs of this triple Chimæra would clear you."

In this poem, which has all the effect of an impromptu, we have a *genre* picture of Roman life, as vivid as though painted by the pencil of Couture or Cerôme.

Serenades were as common an expedient among the Roman gallants of the days of Augustus as among their modern successors. In the fine climate of Greece, Italy, and Spain, they were a natural growth, and involved no great strain upon a wooer's endurance. They assume a very different aspect under a northern sky, where young Absolute, found by his Lydia Languish "in the garden, in the coldest night in January, stuck like a dripping statue," presents a rather lugubrious spectacle. Horace (Odes, III. 7) warns the fair Asterië, during the absence of her husband abroad, to shut her ears against the musical nocturnes of a certain Enipeus :—

> "At nightfall shut your doors, nor then
> Look down into the street again,
> When quavering fifes complain;"

using almost the words of Shylock to his daughter Jessica :—

> "Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum
> *And the vile squeaking of the wrynecked fife,*
> Clamber not you up to the casement then,
> Nor thrust your head into the public street."

The name given to such a serenade, adopted probably, with the serenades themselves, from Greece, was *paraclausithyron*—literally, an out-of-door lament. Here is a specimen of what they were (Odes, III. 10), in which, under the guise of imitating their form, Horace quietly makes a mock of the absurdity of the practice. His serenader has none of the insensibility to the elements of the lover in the Scotch song :—

"Wi' the sleet in my hair, I'd gang ten miles and mair,
For a word o' that sweet lip o' thine, o' thine,
For ae glance o' thy dark e'e divine."

Neither is there in his pleading the tone of earnest entreaty which marks the wooer, in a similar plight, of Burns's "Let me in this ae nicht"—

"Thou hear'st the winter wind and weet,
Nae star blinks through the driving sleet;
Tak pity on my weary feet,
And shield me frae the rain, jo."

There can be no mistake as to the seriousness of this appeal. Horace's is a mere *jeu-d'esprit* :—

"Though your drink were Tanais, chillest of rivers,
And your lot with some conjugal savage were cast,
You would pity, sweet Lycè, the poor soul that shivers
Out here at your door in the merciless blast.

"Only hark how the doorway goes straining and creaking,
And the piercing wind pipes through the trees that surround
The court of your villa, while black frost is streaking
With ice the crisp snow that lies thick on the ground!

"In your pride—Venus hates it—no longer envelop ye,
Or haply you'll find yourself laid on the shelf;
You never were made for a prudish Penelope,
'Tis not in the blood of your sires or yourself.

"Though nor gifts nor entreaties can win a soft answer,
Nor the violet pale of my love-ravaged cheek,
To your husband's intrigue with a Greek ballet-dancer,
Though you still are blind, and forgiving and meek;

"Yet be not as cruel—forgive my upbraiding—
As snakes, nor as hard as the toughest of oak;
To stand out here, drenched to the skin, serenading
All night may in time prove too much of a joke."

It is not often that Horace's poetry is vitiated by bad taste. Strangely enough, almost the only instances of it occur where he is writing of women, as in the Ode to Lydia (Book I. 25) and to Lyce (Book IV. 13). Both ladies seem to have been former favourites of his, and yet the burden of these poems is exultation in the decay of their charms. The deadening influence of mere sensuality, and of the prevalent low tone of morals, must indeed have been great, when a man "so singularly susceptible," as Lord Lytton has truly described him, "to amiable, graceful, gentle, and noble impressions of man and of life," could write of a woman whom he had once loved in a strain like this:—

"The gods have heard, the gods have heard my prayer;
Yes, Lyce! you are growing old, and still
You struggle to look fair;
You drink, and dance, and trill
Your songs to youthful love, in accents weak
With wine, and age, and passion. Youthful Love!
He dwells in Chia's cheek,
And hears her harp-strings move.
Rude boy, he flies like lightning o'er the heath
Past withered trees like you; you're wrinkled now;
The white has left your teeth,
And settled on your brow.
Your Coan silks, your jewels bright as stars—
Ah no! they bring not back the days of old,
In public calendars
By flying time enrolled.

Where now that beauty? Where those movements? Where
That colour? What of her, of her is left,
Who, breathing Love's own air,
Me of myself bereft,
Who reigned in Cinara's stead, a fair, fair face,
Queen of sweet arts? But Fate to Cinara gave
A life of little space;
And now she cheats the grave
Of Lyce, spared to raven's length of days,
That youth may see, with laughter and disgust,
A firebrand, once ablaze,
Now smouldering in grey dust." (C.)

What had this wretched Lyce done that Horace should have prayed the gods to strip her of her charms, and to degrade her from a haughty beauty into a maudlin hag, disgusting and ridiculous? Why cast such very merciless stones at one who, by his own avowal, had erewhile witched his very soul from him? Why rejoice to see this once beautiful creature the scoff of all the heartless young fops of Rome? If she had injured him, what of that? Was it so very strange that a woman trained, like all the class to which she belonged, to be the plaything of man's caprice, should have been fickle, mercenary, or even heartless? Poor Lyce might at least have claimed his silence, if he could not do, what Thackeray says every honest fellow should do, "think well of the woman he has once thought well of, and remember her with kindness and tenderness, as a man remembers a place where he has been very happy."

Horace's better self comes out in his playful appeal

to his friend Xanthias (Odes, II. 4) not to be ashamed of having fallen in love with his handmaiden Phyllis. That she is a slave is a matter of no account. A girl of such admirable qualities must surely come of a good stock, and is well worth any man's love. Did not Achilles succumb to Briseis, Ajax to Tecmessa, Agamemnon himself to Cassandra? Moreover,

"For aught that you know, the fair Phyllis may be
The shoot of some highly respectable stem;
Nay, she counts, never doubt it, some kings in her tree,
And laments the lost acres once lorded by them.
Never think that a creature so exquisite grew
In the haunts where but vice and dishonour are known,
Nor deem that a girl so unselfish, so true,
Had a mother 'twould shame thee to take for thine own."

Here we have the true Horace; and after all these fascinating but doubtful Lydés, Neæras, and Pyrrhas, it is pleasant to come across a young beauty like this Phyllis, *sic fidelem, sic lucro aversam.* She, at least, is a fresh and fragrant violet among the languorous hothouse splendours of the Horatian garden.

Domestic love, which plays so large a part in modern poetry, is a theme rarely touched on in Roman verse. Hence we know but little of the Romans in their homes—for such a topic used to be thought beneath the dignity of history—and especially little of the women, who presided over what have been called "the tender and temperate honours of the hearth." The ladies who flourish in the poetry and also in the history of those times, however conspicuous for beauty or attraction, are not generally of the kind

that make home happy. Such matrons as we chiefly read of there would in the present day be apt to figure in the divorce court. Nor is the explanation of this difficult. The prevalence of marriage for mere wealth or connection, and the facility of divorce, which made the marriage-tie almost a farce among the upper classes, had resulted, as it could not fail to do, in a great debasement of morals. A lady did not lose caste either by being divorced, or by seeking divorce, from husband after husband. And as wives in the higher ranks often held the purse-strings, they made themselves pretty frequently more dreaded than beloved by their lords, through being tyrannical, if not unchaste, or both. So at least Horace plainly indicates (Odes, III. 24), when contrasting the vices of Rome with the simpler virtues of some of the nations that were under its sway. In those happier lands, he says, "*Nec dotata regit virum conjux, nec nitido fidit adultero*"—

> "No dowried dame her spouse
> O'erbears, nor trusts the sleek seducer's vows."

But it would be as wrong to infer from this that the taint was universal, as it would be to gauge our own social morality by the erratic matrons and fast young ladies with whom satirical essayists delight to point their periods. The human heart is stronger than the corruptions of luxury, even among the luxurious and the rich; and the life of struggle and privation which is the life of the mass of every nation would have been intolerable but for the security and peace of well-

ordered and happy households. Sweet honest love, cemented by years of sympathy and mutual endurance, was then, as ever, the salt of human life. Many a monumental inscription, steeped in the tenderest pathos, assures us of the fact. What, for example, must have been the home of the man who wrote on his wife's tomb, "She never caused me a pang but when she died!" And Catullus, mere man of pleasure as he was, must have had strongly in his heart the thought of what a tender and pure-souled woman had been in his friend's home, when he wrote his exquisite lines to Calvus on the death of Quinctilia:—

"Calvus, if those now silent in the tomb
Can feel the touch of pleasure in our tears
For those we loved, that perished in their bloom,
And the departed friends of former years—
Oh, then, full surely thy Quinctilia's love
For the untimely fate, that bids thee part,
Will fade before the bliss she feels to know
How very dear she is unto thy heart!"

Horace, the bachelor, revered the marriage-tie, and did his best, by his verses, to forward the policy of Augustus in his effort to arrest the decay of morals by enforcing the duty of marriage, which the well-to-do Romans of that day were inclined to shirk whenever they could. Nay, the charm of constancy and conjugal sympathy inspired a few of his very finest lines (Odes, I. 13)—"*Felices ter et amplius, quos irrupta tenet copula*," &c.,—the feeling of which is better preserved in Moore's well-known paraphrase than is possible in mere translation:—

"There's a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told,
When two that are linked in one heavenly tie,
With heart never changing, and brow never cold,
Love on through all ills, and love on till they die!
One hour of a passion so sacred is worth
Whole ages of heartless and wandering bliss;
And oh! if there be an Elysium on earth,
It is this, it is this!"

To leave the *placens uxor*—"the winsome wife"—behind, is one of the saddest regrets, Horace tells his friend Posthumus (Odes, II. 14), which death can bring. Still Horace only sang the praises of marriage, contenting himself with painting the Eden within which, for reasons unknown to us, he never sought to enter. He was well up in life, probably, before these sager views dawned upon him. Was it then too late to reduce his precepts to practice, or was he unable to overcome his dread of the *dotata conjux*, and thought his comfort would be safer in the hands of some less exacting fair, such as the Phyllis to whom the following Ode, one of his latest (IV. 11), is addressed?—

"I have laid in a cask of Albanian wine,
Which nine mellow summers have ripened and more;
In my garden, dear Phyllis, thy brows to entwine,
Grows the brightest of parsley in plentiful store.
There is ivy to gleam on thy dark glossy hair;
My plate, newly burnished, enlivens my rooms;
And the altar, athirst for its victim, is there,
Enwreathed with chaste vervain and choicest of blooms.

"Every hand in the household is busily toiling,
And hither and thither boys bustle and girls;

Whilst, up from the hearth-fires careering and coiling,
The smoke round the rafter-beams languidly curls.
Let the joys of the revel be parted between us!
'Tis the Ides of young April, the day which divides
The month, dearest Phyllis, of ocean-sprung Venus,
A day to me dearer than any besides.

"And well may I prize it, and hail its returning—
My own natal-day not more hallowed nor dear;
For Mæcenas, my friend, dates from this happy morning
The life which has swelled to a lustrous career.
You sigh for young Telephus: better forget him!
His rank is not yours, and the gaudier charms
Of a girl that's both wealthy and wanton benet him,
And hold him the fondest of slaves in her arms.

"Remember fond Phaëthon's fiery sequel,
And heavenward-aspiring Bellerophon's fate;
And pine not for one who would ne'er be your equal,
But level your hopes to a lowlier mate.
So, come, my own Phyllis, my heart's latest treasure—
For ne'er for another this bosom shall long—
And I'll teach, while your loved voice re-echoes the measure,
How to charm away care with the magic of song."

This is very pretty and picturesque; and Mæcenas was sure to be charmed with it as a birthday Ode, for such it certainly was, whether there was any real Phyllis in the case or not. Most probably there was not,—the allusion to Telephus, the lady-killer, is so very like many other allusions of the same kind in other Odes, which are plainly mere exercises of fancy, and the protestation that the lady is the very, very last of his loves, so precisely what all middle-aged gentlemen think it right to say, whose "*jeunesse*," like the poet's, has been notoriously "*orageuse*."

It was probably not within the circle of his city friends that Horace saw the women for whom he entertained the deepest respect, but by the hearth-fire in the farmhouse, "the homely house, that harbours quiet rest," with which he was no less familiar, where people lived in a simple and natural way, and where, if anywhere, good wives and mothers were certain to be found. It was manifestly by some woman of this class that the following poem (Odes, III. 23) was inspired:—

"If thou, at each new moon, thine upturned palms,
My rustic Phidyle, to heaven shalt lift,
The Lares soothe with steam of fragrant balms,
A sow, and fruits new-plucked, thy simple gift,

"Nor venomed blast shall nip thy fertile vine,
Nor mildew blight thy harvest in the ear;
Nor shall thy flocks, sweet nurslings, peak and pine,
When apple-bearing Autumn chills the year.

"The victim marked for sacrifice, that feeds
On snow-capped Algidus, in leafy lane
Of oak and ilex, or on Alba's meads,
With its rich blood the pontiff's axe may stain;

"Thy little gods for humbler tribute call
Than blood of many victims; twine for them
Of rosemary a simple coronal,
And the lush myrtle's frail and fragrant stem.

"The costliest sacrifice that wealth can make
From the incensed Penates less commands
A soft response, than doth the poorest cake,
If on the altar laid with spotless hands."

When this was written, Horace had got far beyond

the Epicurean creed of his youth. He had come to believe in the active intervention of a Supreme Disposer of events in the government of the world,—"*insignem attenuans, obscura promens*" (Odes, I. 34):—

> "The mighty ones of earth o'erthrowing,
> Advancing the obscure;—

and to whose "pure eyes and perfect witness" a blameless life and a conscience void of offence were not indifferent.

CHAPTER VII.

HORACE'S POEMS TO HIS FRIENDS.—HIS PRAISES OF CONTENTMENT.

If it be merely the poet, and not the lover, who speaks in most of Horace's love verses, there can never be any doubt that the poems to his friends come direct from his heart. They glow with feeling. To whatever chord they are attuned, sad, or solemn, or joyous, they are always delightful; consummate in their grace of expression, while they have all the warmth and easy flow of spontaneous emotion. Take, for example, the following (Odes, II. 7). Pompeius Varus, a fellow-student with Horace at Athens, and a brother in arms under Brutus, who, after the defeat of Philippi, had joined the party of the younger Pompey, has returned to Rome, profiting probably by the general amnesty granted by Octavius to his adversaries after the battle of Actium. How his heart must have leapt at such a welcome from his poet-friend as this!—

"Dear comrade in the days when thou and I
With Brutus took the field, his perils bore,

Who hath restored thee, freely as of yore,
To thy home gods, and loved Italian sky,

"Pompey, who wert the first my heart to share,
With whom full oft I've sped the lingering day,
Quaffing bright wine, as in our tents we lay,
With Syrian spikenard on our glistening hair?

"With thee I shared Philippi's headlong flight,
My shield behind me left, which was not well,
When all that brave array was broke, and fell
In the vile dust full many a towering wight.

"But me, poor trembler, swift Mercurius bore,
Wrapped in a cloud, through all the hostile din,
Whilst war's tumultuous eddies, closing in,
Swept thee away into the strife once more.

"Then pay to Jove the feasts that are his fee,
And stretch at ease these war-worn limbs of thine
Beneath my laurel's shade; nor spare the wine
Which I have treasured through long years for thee.

"Pour till it touch the shining goblet's rim,
Care-drowning Massic; let rich ointments flow
From amplest conchs! No measure we shall know!
What! shall we wreaths of oozy parsley trim,

"Or simple myrtle? Whom will Venus* send
To rule our revel? Wild my draughts shall be
As Thracian Bacchanals', for 'tis sweet to me
To lose my wits, when I regain my friend."

When Horace penned the playful allusion here

* Venus was the highest cast of the dice. The meaning here is, Who shall be the master of our feast?—that office falling to the member of the wine-party who threw sixes.

made to having left his shield on the field of battle (*parmulâ non bene relictâ*), he could never have thought that his commentators—professed admirers, too—would extract from it an admission of personal cowardice. As if any man, much more a Roman to Romans, would make such a confession! Horace could obviously afford to put in this way the fact of his having given up a desperate cause, for this very reason, that he had done his duty on the field of Philippi, and that it was known he had done it. Commentators will be so cruelly prosaic! The poet was quite as serious in saying that Mercury carried him out of the *melée* in a cloud, like one of Homer's heroes, as that he had left his shield discreditably (*non bene*) on the battle-field. But it requires a poetic sympathy, which in classical editors is rare, to understand that, as Lessing and others have urged, the very way he speaks of his own retreat was by implication a compliment, not ungraceful, to his friend, who had continued the struggle against the triumvirate, and come home at last, war-worn and weary, to find the more politic comrade of his youth one of the celebrities of Rome, and on the best of terms with the very men against whom they had once fought side by side.

Not less beautiful is the following Ode to Septimius, another of the poet's old companions in arms (Odes, II. 6). His speaking of himself in it as "with war and travel worn" has puzzled the commentators, as it is plain from the rest of the poem that it must have been written long after his campaigning days were past. But the fatigues of those days may

have left their traces for many years; and the difficulty is at once got over if we suppose the poem to have been written under some little depression from languid health due to this cause. Tarentum, where his friend lived, and whose praises are so warmly sung, was a favourite resort of the poet's. He used to ride there (p. 65) on his mule, very possibly to visit Septimius, before he had his own Sabine villa; and all his love for that villa never chilled his admiration for Tibur, with its "silvan shades, and orchards moist with wimpling rills,"—the "*Tiburni lucus, et uda mobilibus pomaria rivis,*"—and its milder climate, so genial to his sun-loving temperament:—

"Septimius, thou who wouldst, I know,
With me to distant Gades go,
And visit the Cantabrian fell,
Whom all our triumphs cannot quell,
And even the sands barbarian brave,
Where ceaseless seethes the Moorish wave;

"May Tibur, that delightful haunt,
Reared by an Argive emigrant,
The tranquil haven be, I pray,
For my old age to wear away;
Oh, may it be the final bourne
To one with war and travel worn!

"But should the cruel fates decree
That this, my friend, shall never be,
Then to Galæsus, river sweet
To skin-clad flocks, will I retreat,
And those rich meads, where sway of yore
Laconian Phalanthus bore.

"In all the world no spot there is,
That wears for me a smile like this,
The honey of whose thymy fields
May vie with what Hymettus yields,
Where berries clustering every slope
May with Venafrum's greenest cope.

"There Jove accords a lengthened spring,
And winters wanting winter's sting,
And sunny Aulon's* broad incline
Such mettle puts into the vine,
Its clusters need not envy those
Which fiery Falernum grows.

"Thyself and me that spot invites,
Those pleasant fields, those sunny heights;
And there, to life's last moments true,
Wilt thou with some fond tears bedew—
The last sad tribute love can lend—
The ashes of thy poet-friend."

Septimius was himself a poet, or thought himself one, who,

"Holding vulgar ponds and runnels cheap,
At Pindar's fount drank valiantly and deep,"

as Horace says of him in an Epistle (I. 3) to Julius Florus; adding, with a sly touch of humour, which throws more than a doubt on the poetic powers of their common friend,—

"Thinks he of me? And does he still aspire
To marry Theban strains to Latium's lyre,
Thanks to the favouring muse? Or haply rage
And mouth in bombast for the tragic stage?"

Galæsus (Galasò), a river; Aulon, a hill near Tarentum.

When this was written Septimius was in Armenia along with Florus, on the staff of Tiberius Claudius Nero, the future emperor. For this appointment he was probably indebted to Horace, who applied for it, at his request, in the following Epistle to Tiberius (I. 9), which Addison ('Spectator,' 493) cites as a fine specimen of what a letter of introduction should be. Horace was, on principle, wisely chary of giving such introductions.

"Look round and round the man you recommend,
For yours will be the shame if he offend," (C.)

is his maxim on this subject (Epistles, I. 18, 76); and he was sure to be especially scrupulous in writing to Tiberius, who, even in his youth—and he was at this time about twenty-two—was so morose and unpleasant in his manners, to say nothing of his ample share of the hereditary pride of the Claudian family, that even Augustus felt under constraint in his company:—

"Septimius only understands, 'twould seem,
How high I stand in, Claudius, your esteem:
For when he begs and prays me, day by day,
Before you his good qualities to lay,
As not unfit the heart and home to share
Of Nero, who selects his friends with care;
When he supposes you to me extend
The rights and place of a familiar friend,
Far better than myself he sees and knows,
How far with you my commendation goes.
Pleas without number I protest I've used,
In hope he'd hold me from the task excused,
Yet feared the while it might be thought I feigned
Too low the influence I perchance have gained,

Dissembling it as nothing with my friends,
To keep it for my own peculiar ends.
So, to escape such dread reproach, I put
My blushes by, and boldly urge my suit.
If then you hold it as a grace, though small,
To doff one's bashfulness at friendship's call,
Enrol him in your suite, assured you'll find
A man of heart in him, as well as mind."

We may be very sure that, among the many pleas urged by Horace for not giving Septimius the introduction he desired, was the folly of leaving his delightful retreat at Tarentum to go once more abroad in search of wealth or promotion. Let others "cross, to plunder provinces, the main," surely this was no ambition for an embryo Pindar or half-developed Æschylus. Horace had tried similar remonstrances before, and with just as little success, upon Iccius, another of his scholarly friends, who sold off his fine library and joined an expedition into Arabia Felix, expecting to find it an El Dorado. He playfully asks this studious friend (Odes, I. 29), from whom he expected better things — "*pollicitus meliora*" — if it be true that he grudges the Arabs their wealth, and is actually forging fetters for the hitherto invincible Sabæan monarchs, and those terrible Medians? To which of the royal damsels does he intend to throw the handkerchief, having first cut down her princely betrothed in single combat? Or what young "oiled and curled" Oriental prince is for the future to pour out his wine for him? Iccius, like many another Raleigh, went out to gather wool, and came back shorn. The expedition proved disastrous, and he was lucky in being

one of the few who survived it. Some years afterwards we meet with him again as the steward of Agrippa's great estates in Sicily. He has resumed his studies,—

> "On themes sublime alone intent,—
> What causes the wild ocean sway,
> The seasons what from June to May,
> If free the constellations roll,
> Or moved by some supreme control;
> What makes the moon obscure her light,
> What pours her splendour on the night."

Absorbed in these and similar inquiries, and living happily on "herbs and frugal fare," Iccius realises the noble promise of his youth; and Horace, in writing to him (Epist., I. 12), encourages him in his disregard of wealth by some of those hints for contentment which the poet never tires of reproducing:—

> "Let no care trouble you; for poor
> That man is not, who can insure
> Whate'er for life is needful found.
> Let your digestion be but sound,
> Your side unwrung by spasm or stitch,
> Your foot unconscious of a twitch;
> And could you be more truly blest,
> Though of the wealth of kings possessed?"

It must have been pleasant to Horace to find even one among his friends illustrating in his life this modest Socratic creed; for he is so constantly enforcing it, in every variety of phrase and metaphor, that while we must conclude that he regarded it as the one doctrine most needful for his time, we must equally

conclude that he found it utterly disregarded. All round him wealth, wealth, wealth, was the universal aim: wealth, to build fine houses in town, and villas at Præneste or Baiæ; wealth, to stock them with statues, old bronzes (mostly fabrications from the Wardour Streets of Athens or Rome), ivories, pictures, gold plate, pottery, tapestry, stuffs from the looms of Tyre, and other *articles de luxe;* wealth, to give gorgeous dinners, and wash them down with the costliest wines; wealth, to provide splendid equipages, to forestall the front seats in the theatre, as we do opera-boxes on the grand tier, and so get a few yards nearer to the Emperor's chair, or gain a closer view of the favourite actor or dancer of the day; wealth, to secure a wife with a fortune and a pedigree; wealth, to attract gad-fly friends, who will consume your time, eat your dinners, drink your wines, and then abuse them, and who will with amiable candour regale their circle by quizzing your foibles, or slandering your taste, if they are even so kind as to spare your character. "A dowried wife," he says (Epistles, I. 6),

> "Friends, beauty, birth, fair fame,
> These are the gifts of money, heavenly dame;
> Be but a moneyed man, persuasion tips
> Your tongue, and Venus settles on your lips." (C.)

And to achieve this wealth, no sacrifice was to be spared—time, happiness, health, honour itself. "*Rem facias, rem! Si possis recte, si non, quocunque modo rem:*"—

> "Get money, money still,
> And then let Virtue follow, if she will."

Wealth sought in this spirit, and for such ends, of course brought no more enjoyment to the contemporaries of Horace than we see it doing to our own. And not the least evil of the prevailing mania, then as now, was, that it robbed life of its simplicity, and of the homely friendliness on which so much of its pleasure depends. People lived for show—to propitiate others, not to satisfy their own better instincts or their genuine convictions; and straining after the shadow of enjoyment, they let the reality slip from their grasp. They never "were, but always to be, blest." It was the old story, which the world is continually re-enacting, while the sage stands by, and marvels at its folly, and preaches what we call commonplaces, in a vain endeavour to modify or to prevent it. But the wisdom of life consists of commonplaces, which we should all be much the better for working into our practice, instead of complacently sneering at them as platitudes. Horace abounds in commonplaces, and on no theme more than this. He has no divine law of duty to appeal to, as we have—no assured hereafter to which he may point the minds of men; but he presses strongly home their folly, in so far as this world is concerned. To what good, he asks, all this turmoil and disquiet? No man truly possesses more than he is able thoroughly to enjoy. Grant that you roll in gold, or, by accumulating land, become, in Hamlet's phrase, "spacious in the possession of dirt." What pleasure will you extract from these, which a moderate estate will not yield in equal, if not greater, measure? You fret yourself to acquire your wealth—

you fret yourself lest you should lose it. It robs you of your health, your ease of mind, your freedom of thought and action. Riches will not bribe inexorable death to spare you. At any hour that great leveller may sweep you away into darkness and dust, and what will it then avail you, that you have wasted all your hours, and foregone all wholesome pleasure, in adding ingot to ingot, or acre to acre, for your heirs to squander? Set a bound, then, to your desires: think not of how much others have, but of how much which they have you can do perfectly well without. Be not the slave of show or circumstance, "but in yourself possess your own desire." Do not lose the present in vain perplexities about the future. If fortune lours to-day, she may smile to-morrow; and when she lavishes her gifts upon you, cherish an humble heart, and so fortify yourself against her caprice. Keep a rein upon all your passions—upon covetousness, above all; for once that has you within its clutch, farewell for ever to the light heart and the sleep that comes unbidden, to the open eye that drinks in delight from the beauty and freshness and infinite variety of nature, to the unclouded mind that judges justly and serenely of men and things. Enjoy wisely, for then only you enjoy thoroughly. Live each day as though it were your last. Mar not your life by a hopeless quarrel with destiny. It will be only too brief at the best, and the day is at hand when its inequalities will be redressed, and king and peasant, pauper and millionaire, be huddled, poor shivering phantoms, in one undistinguishable crowd, across the melancholy Styx, to the judg-

ment-hall of Minos. To this theme many of Horace's finest Odes are strung. Of these, not the least graceful is that addressed to Dellius (II. 3):—

"Let not the frowns of fate
Disquiet thee, my friend,
Nor, when she smiles on thee, do thou, elate
With vaunting thoughts, ascend
Beyond the limits of becoming mirth;
For, Dellius, thou must die, become a clod of earth!

"Whether thy days go down
In gloom, and dull regrets,
Or, shunning life's vain struggle for renown,
Its fever and its frets,
Stretch'd on the grass, with old Falernian wine,
Thou giv'st the thoughtless hours a rapture all divine.

"Where the tall spreading pine
And white-leaved poplar grow,
And, mingling their broad boughs in leafy twine,
A grateful shadow throw,
Where down its broken bed the wimpling stream
Writhes on its sinuous way with many a quivering gleam,

"There wine, there perfumes bring,
Bring garlands of the rose,
Fair and too shortlived daughter of the spring,
While youth's bright current flows
Within thy veins,—ere yet hath come the hour
When the dread Sisters Three shall clutch thee in their power.

"Thy woods, thy treasured pride,
Thy mansion's pleasant seat,
Thy lawns washed by the Tiber's yellow tide,
Each favourite retreat,

Thou must leave all—all, and thine heir shall run
In riot through the wealth thy years of toil have won.

"It recks not whether thou
Be opulent, and trace
Thy birth from kings, or bear upon thy brow
Stamp of a beggar's race;
In rags or splendour, death at thee alike,
That no compassion hath for aught of earth, will strike.

"One road, and to one bourne
We all are goaded. Late
Or soon will issue from the urn
Of unrelenting Fate
The lot, that in yon bark exiles us all
To undiscovered shores, from which is no recall."

In a still higher strain he sings (Odes, III. 1) the ultimate equality of all human souls, and the vanity of encumbering life with the anxieties of ambition or wealth:—

"Whate'er our rank may be,
We all partake one common destiny!
In fair expanse of soil,
Teeming with rich returns of wine and oil,
His neighbour one outvies;
Another claims to rise
To civic dignities,
Because of ancestry and noble birth,
Or fame, or proved pre-eminence of worth,
Or troops of clients, clamorous in his cause;
Still Fate doth grimly stand,
And with impartial hand
The lots of lofty and of lowly draws
From that capacious urn
Whence every name that lives is shaken in its turn.

"To him, above whose guilty head,
Suspended by a thread,
The naked sword is hung for evermore,
Not feasts Sicilian shall
With all their cates recall
That zest the simplest fare could once inspire;
Nor song of birds, nor music of the lyre
Shall his lost sleep restore:
But gentle sleep shuns not
The rustic's lowly cot,
Nor mossy bank o'ercanopied with trees,
Nor Tempe's leafy vale stirred by the western breeze.

"The man who lives content with whatsoe'er
Sufficeth for his needs,
The storm-tossed ocean vexeth not with care,
Nor the fierce tempest which Arcturus breeds,
When in the sky he sets,
Nor that which Hœdus, at his rise, begets:
Nor will he grieve, although
His vines be all laid low
Beneath the driving hail,
Nor though, by reason of the drenching rain,
Or heat, that shrivels up his fields like fire,
Or fierce extremities of winter's ire,
Blight shall o'erwhelm his fruit-trees and his grain,
And all his farm's delusive promise fail.

"The fish are conscious that a narrower bound
Is drawn the seas around
By masses huge hurled down into the deep.
There, at the bidding of a lord, for whom
Not all the land he owns is ample room,
Do the contractor and his labourers heap
Vast piles of stone, the ocean back to sweep.

But let him climb in pride,
That lord of halls unblest,
Up to their topmost crest,
Yet ever by his side
Climb Terror and Unrest;
Within the brazen galley's sides
Care, ever wakeful, flits,
And at his back, when forth in state he rides,
Her withering shadow sits.

"If thus it fare with all,
If neither marbles from the Phrygian mine,
Nor star-bright robes of purple and of pall,
Nor the Falernian vine,
Nor costliest balsams, fetched from farthest Ind,
Can soothe the restless mind,
Why should I choose
To rear on high, as modern spendthrifts use,
A lofty hall, might be the home for kings,
With portals vast, for Malice to abuse,
Or Envy make her theme to point a tale;
Or why for wealth, which new-born trouble brings,
Exchange my Sabine vale?"

CHAPTER VIII.

PREVAILING BELIEF IN ASTROLOGY.—HORACE'S VIEWS OF A HEREAFTER.—RELATIONS WITH MÆCENAS.—BELIEF IN THE PERMANENCE OF HIS OWN FAME.

"When all looks fair about," says Sir Thomas Browne, "and thou seest not a cloud so big as a hand to threaten thee, forget not the wheel of things; think of sudden vicissitudes, but beat not thy brains to foreknow them." It was characteristic of an age of luxury that it should be one of superstition and mental disquietude, eager to penetrate the future, and credulous in its belief of those who pretended to unveil its secrets. In such an age astrology naturally found many dupes. Rome was infested with professors of that so-called science, who had flocked thither from the East, and were always ready, like other oracles, to supply responses acceptable to their votaries. In what contempt Horace held their prognostications the following Ode (I. 11) very clearly indicates. The women of Rome, according to Juvenal, were great believers in astrology, and carried manuals of it on their persons, which they consulted before they took an airing or broke their fast. Possibly on this account

Horace addressed the ode to a lady. But in such things, and not under the Roman Empire only, there have always been, as La Fontaine says, "*bon nombre d'hommes qui sont femmes.*" If Augustus, and his great general and statesman Agrippa, had a Theogenes to forecast their fortunes, so the first Napoleon had his Madame Lenormand.

"Ask not—such lore's forbidden—
What destined term may be
Within the future hidden
For us, Leuconöe.
Both thou and I
Must quickly die!
Content thee, then, nor madly hope
To wrest a false assurance from Chaldean horoscope.

"Far nobler, better were it,
Whate'er may be in store,
With soul serene to bear it,
If winters many more
Jove spare for thee,
Or this shall be
The last, that now with sullen roar
Scatters the Tuscan surge in foam upon the rock-bound shore.

"Be wise, your spirit firing
With cups of tempered wine,
And hopes afar aspiring
In compass brief confine,
Use all life's powers;
The envious hours
Fly as we talk; then live to-day,
Nor fondly to to-morrow trust more than you must or may."

In the verses of Horace we are perpetually reminded that our life is compassed round with darkness, but he will not suffer this darkness to overshadow his cheerfulness. On the contrary, the beautiful world, and the delights it offers, are made to stand out, as it were, in brighter relief against the gloom of Orcus. Thus, for example, this very gloom is made the background in the following Ode (I. 4) for the brilliant pictures which crowd on the poet's fancy with the first burst of Spring. Here, he says, oh Sestius, all is fresh and joyous, luxuriant and lovely! Be happy, drink in "at every pore the spirit of the season," while the roses are fresh within your hair, and the wine-cup flashes ruby in your hand. Yonder lies Pluto's meagrely-appointed mansion, and filmy shadows of the dead are waiting for you there, to swell their joyless ranks. To that unlovely region you must go, alas! too soon; but the golden present is yours, so drain it of its sweets.

"As biting Winter flies, lo! Spring with sunny skies,
And balmy airs; and barks long dry put out again from shore;
Now the ox forsakes his byre, and the husbandman his fire,
And daisy-dappled meadows bloom where winter frosts lay hoar.

"By Cytherea led, while the moon shines overhead,
The Nymphs and Graces, hand-in-hand, with alternating feet
Shake the ground, while swinking Vulcan strikes the sparkles fierce and red
From the forges of the Cyclops, with reiterated beat.

"'Tis the time with myrtle green to bind our glistening locks,
Or with flowers, wherein the loosened earth herself hath newly dressed,
And to sacrifice to Faunus in some glade amidst the rocks
A yearling lamb, or else a kid, if such delight him best.

"Death comes alike to all—to the monarch's lordly hall,
Or the hovel of the beggar, and his summons none shall stay.
Oh, Sestius, happy Sestius! use the moments as they pass;
Far-reaching hopes are not for us, the creatures of a day.

"Thee soon shall night enshroud; and the Manes' phantom crowd,
And the starveling house unbeautiful of Pluto shut thee in;
And thou shalt not banish care by the ruddy wine-cup there,
Nor woo the gentle Lycidas, whom all are mad to win."

A modern would no more think of using such images as those of the last two verses to stimulate the festivity of his friends than he would of placing, like the old Egyptians, a skull upon his dinner-table, or of decorating his ball-room with Holbein's "Dance of Death." We rebuke our pride or keep our vanities in check by the thought of death, and our poets use it to remind us that

"The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things."

Horace does this too; but out of the sad certainty of mortality he seems to extract a keener zest for the too brief enjoyment of the flying hours. Why is this? Probably because by the pagan mind life on this side the grave was regarded as a thing more precious, more

noble, than the life beyond. That there was a life beyond was undoubtedly the general belief. "*Sunt aliquid Manes; letum non omnia finit, Luridaque evictos effugit umbra rogos,*"—

> "The Manes are no dream; death closes not
> Our all of being, and the wan-visaged shade
> Escapes unscathed from the funereal fires,"

says Propertius (Eleg. IV. 7); and unless this were so, there would be no meaning whatever in the whole pagan idea of Hades—in the "*domus exilis Plutonia;*" in the Hermes driving the spirits of the dead across the Styx; in the "*judicantem Æacum, sedesque discretas piorum*"—the "Æacus dispensing doom, and the Elysian Fields serene" (Odes, II. 13). But this after-life was a cold, sunless, unsubstantial thing, lower in quality and degree than the full, vigorous, passionate life of this world. The nobler spirits of antiquity, it hardly need be said, had higher dreams of a future state than this. For them, no more than for us, was it possible to rest in the conviction that their brief and troubled career on earth was to be the "be all and the end all" of existence, or that those whom they had loved and lost in death became thenceforth as though they had never been. It is idle to draw, as is often done, a different conclusion from such phrases as that after death we are a shadow and mere dust, "*pulvis et umbra sumus!*" or from Horace's bewildered cry (Odes, I. 24), when a friend of signal nobleness and purity is suddenly struck down—"*Ergo Quinctilium perpetuus sopor urget?*"—"And is Quinc-

tilius, then, weighed down by a sleep that knows no waking?" We might as reasonably argue that Shakespeare did not believe in a life after death because he makes Prospero say—

> "We are such stuff
> As dreams are made of, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep."

Horace and Shakespeare both believed in an immortality, but it was an immortality different in its kind. Horace, indeed,—who, as a rule, is wisely silent on a question which for him had no solution, however much it may have engaged his speculations,—has gleams not unlike those which irradiate our happier creed, as when he writes (Odes, III. 2) of "*Virtus, recludens immeritis mori cœlum, negata tentat iter via*"—

> "Worth, which heaven's gates to those unbars
> Who never should have died,
> A pathway cleaves among the stars,
> To meaner souls denied."

But they are only gleams, impassioned hopes, yearnings of the unsatisfied soul in its search for some solution of the great mystery of life. To him, therefore, it was of more moment than it was to us, to make the most of the present, and to stimulate his relish for what it has to give by contrasting it with a phantasmal future, in which no single faculty of enjoyment should be left.

Take from life the time spent in hopes or fears or regrets, and how small the residue! For the same reason, therefore, that he prized life intensely, Horace

seems to have resolved to keep these consumers of its hours as much at bay as possible. He would not look too far forward even for a pleasure; for Hope, he knew, comes never unaccompanied by her twin sister Fear. Like the Persian poet, Omar Khayyám, this is ever in his thoughts—

> "What boots it to repeat,
> How Time is slipping underneath our feet?
> Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday,
> Why fret about them if To-day be sweet?"

To-day—that alone is ours. Let us welcome and note what it brings, and, if good, enjoy it; if evil, endure. Let us, in any case, keep our eyes and senses open and not lose their impressions in dreaming of an irretrievable past or of an impenetrable future. "Write it on your heart," says Emerson ('Society and Solitude'), "that every day is the best day in the year. No man has learned anything rightly until he knows that every day is Doomsday. . . . Ah, poor dupe! will you never learn that as soon as the irrecoverable years have woven their blue glories between To-day and us, these passing hours shall glitter, and draw us, as the wildest romance and the lomes of beauty and poetry?" Horace would have hailed a brother in the philosopher of New England.

Even in inviting Mæcenas to his Sabine farm (Odes, III. 29), he does not think it out of place to remind the minister of state, worn with the cares of government, and looking restlessly ahead to anticipate its difficulties, that it may, after all, be wiser not to look

so far ahead, or to trouble himself about contingencies which may never arise. We must not think that Horace undervalued that essential quality of true statesmanship, the "*animus rerum prudens*" (Odes, IV. 9), the forecasting spirit that "looks into the seeds of Time," and reads the issues of events while they are still far off. He saw and prized the splendid fruits of the exercise of this very power in the growing tranquillity and strength of the Roman empire. But the wisest may over-study a subject. Mæcenas may have been working too hard, and losing under the pressure something of his usual calmness; and Horace, while urging him to escape from town for a few days, may have had it in view to insinuate the suggestion, that Jove smiles, not at the common mortal merely, but even at the sagacious statesman, who is over-anxious about the future—"*ultra fas trepidat*"—and to remind him that, after all,

> "There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we may."

Dryden's splendid paraphrase of this Ode is one of the glories of our literature, but it is a paraphrase, and a version closer to the original may be more appropriate here:—

> "Scion of Tuscan kings, in store
> I've laid a cask of mellow wine,
> That never has been broached before.
> I've roses, too, for wreaths to twine,
> And Nubian nut, that for thy hair
> An oil shall yield of fragrance rare.

"The plenty quit, that only palls,
And, turning from the cloud-capped pile
That towers above thy palace halls,
Forget to worship for a while
The privileges Rome enjoys,
Her smoke, her splendour, and her noise.

"It is the rich who relish best
To dwell at times from state aloof;
And simple suppers, neatly dressed,
Beneath a poor man's humble roof,
With neither pall nor purple there,
Have smoothed ere now the brow of care.

. . . .

"Now with his spent and languid flocks
The wearied shepherd seeks the shade,
The river cool, the shaggy rocks,
That overhang the tangled glade,
And by the stream no breeze's gush
Disturbs the universal hush.

"Thou dost devise with sleepless zeal
What course may best the state beseem,
And, fearful for the City's weal,
Weigh'st anxiously each hostile scheme
That may be hatching far away
In Scythia, India, or Cathay.

"Most wisely Jove in thickest night
The issues of the future veils,
And laughs at the self-torturing wight
Who with imagined terrors quails.
The present only is thine own,
Then use it well, ere it has flown.

"All else which may by time be bred
Is like a river of the plain;

Now gliding gently o'er its bed
Along to the Etruscan main,
Now whirling onwards, fierce and fast,
Uprooted trees, and boulders vast,

"And flocks, and houses, all in drear
Confusion tossed from shore to shore,
While mountains far, and forests near
Reverberate the rising roar,
When lashing rains among the hills
To fury wake the quiet rills.

"Lord of himself that man will be,
And happy in his life alway,
Who still at eve can say with free
Contented soul, 'I've lived to-day!
Let Jove to-morrow, if he will,
With blackest clouds the welkin fill,

"'Or flood it all with sunlight pure,
Yet from the past he cannot take
Its influence, for that is sure,
Nor can he mar or bootless make
Whate'er of rapture and delight
The hours have borne us in their flight.'"

The poet here passes, by one of those sudden transitions for which he is remarkable, into the topic of the fickleness of fortune, which seems to have no immediate connection with what has gone before,—but only seems, for this very fickleness is but a fresh reason for making ourselves, by self-possession and a just estimate of what is essential to happiness, independent of the accidents of time or chance.

"Fortune, who with malicious glee
Her merciless vocation plies,
Benignly smiling now on me,
Now on another, bids him rise,
And in mere wantonness of whim
Her favours shifts from me to him.

"I laud her whilst by me she holds,
But if she spread her pinions swift,
I wrap me in my virtue's folds,
And, yielding back her every gift,
Take refuge in the life so free
Of bare but honest poverty.

"You will not find me, when the mast
Groans 'neath the stress of southern gales,
To wretched prayers rush off, nor cast
Vows to the great gods, lest my bales
From Tyre or Cyprus sink, to be
Fresh booty for the hungry sea.

"When others then in wild despair
To save their cumbrous wealth essay,
I to the vessel's skiff repair,
And, whilst the Twin Stars light my way,
Safely the breeze my little craft
Shall o'er the Ægean billows waft."

Mæcenas was of a melancholy temperament, and liable to great depression of spirits. Not only was his health at no time robust, but he was constitutionally prone to fever, which more than once proved nearly fatal to him. On his first appearance in the theatre after one of these dangerous attacks, he was received with vehement cheers, and Horace alludes twice to this incident in his Odes, as if he knew that

it had given especial pleasure to his friend. To mark the event the poet laid up in his cellar a jar of Sabine wine, and some years afterwards he invites Mæcenas to come and partake of it in this charming lyric (Odes, I. 20):—

"Our common Sabine wine shall be
The only drink I'll give to thee,
In modest goblets, too;
'Twas stored in crock of Grecian delf,
Dear knight Mæcenas, by myself,
That very day when through
The theatre thy plaudits rang,
And sportive echo caught the clang,
And answered from the banks
Of thine own dear paternal stream,
Whilst Vatican renewed the theme
Of homage and of thanks!
Old Cæcuban, the very best,
And juice in vats Calenian pressed,
You drink at home, I know:
My cups no choice Falernian fills,
Nor unto them do Formiæ's hills
Impart a tempered glow."

About the same time that Mæcenas recovered from this fever, Horace made a narrow escape from being killed by the fall of a tree, and, what to him was a great aggravation of the disaster, upon his own beloved farm (Odes, II. 13). He links the two events together as a marked coincidence in the following Ode (II. 17). His friend had obviously been a prey to one of his fits of low spirits, and vexing the kindly soul of the poet by gloomy anticipations of an early death. Suffering,

as Mæcenas did, from those terrible attacks of sleeplessness to which he was subject, and which he tried ineffectually to soothe by the plash of falling water and the sound of distant music,* such misgivings were only too natural. The case was too serious this time for Horace to think of rallying his friend into a brighter humour. He may have even seen good cause to share his fears; for his heart is obviously moved to its very depths, and his sympathy and affection well out in words, the pathos of which is still as fresh as the day they first came with comfort to the saddened spirits of Mæcenas himself.

"Why wilt thou kill me with thy boding fears?
Why, oh Mæcenas, why?
Before thee lies a train of happy years:
Yes, nor the gods nor I
Could brook that thou shouldst first be laid in dust,
Who art my stay, my glory, and my trust!

"Ah, if untimely Fate should snatch thee hence,
Thee, of my soul a part,
Why should I linger on, with deadened sense,
And ever-aching heart,
A worthless fragment of a fallen shrine?
No, no, one day shall see thy death and mine!

"Think not that I have sworn a bootless oath;
Yes, we shall go, shall go,
Hand link'd in hand, whene'er thou leadest, both
The last sad road below!"

* Had Horace this in his mind when he wrote "*Non avium citharæque cantus somnum reducent?*"—(Odes, III. 1.)

"Nor song of birds, nor music of the lyre,
Shall his lost sleep restore."

Me neither the Chimæra's fiery breath,
Nor Gyges, even could Gyges rise from death,

"With all his hundred hands from thee shall sever;
For in such sort it hath
Pleased the dread Fates, and Justice potent ever,
To interweave our path.*
Beneath whatever aspect thou wert born,
Libra, or Scorpion fierce, or Capricorn,

"The blustering tyrant of the western deep,
This well I know, my friend,
Our stars in wondrous wise one orbit keep,
And in one radiance blend.
From thee were Saturn's baleful rays afar
Averted by great Jove's refulgent star,

"And His hand stayed Fate's downward-swooping wing,
When thrice with glad acclaim
The teeming theatre was heard to ring,
And thine the honoured name:
So had the falling timber laid me low,
But Pan in mercy warded off the blow,

"Pan who keeps watch o'er easy souls like mine.
Remember, then, to rear
In gratitude to Jove a votive shrine,
And slaughter many a steer,
Whilst I, as fits, an humbler tribute pay,
And a meek lamb upon his altar lay."

What the poet, in this burst of loving sympathy,

* So Cowley, in his poem on the death of Mr William Harvey:—

"He was my friend, the truest friend on earth;
A strong and mighty influence joined our birth.

said would happen, did happen almost as he foretold it. Mæcenas "first deceased;" and Horace, like the wife in the quaint, tender, old epitaph,

"For a little tried
To live without him, liked it not, and died."

But this was not till many years after this Ode was written, which must have been about the year B.C. 36, when Horace was thirty-nine. Mæcenas lived for seventeen years afterwards, and often and often, we may believe, turned to read the Ode, and be refreshed by it, when his pulse was low, and his heart sick and weary.

Horace included it in the first series of the Odes, containing Books I. and II., which he gave to the world (B.C. 24). The first of these Odes, like the first of the Satires, is addressed to Mæcenas. They had for the most part been written, and were, no doubt, separately in circulation several years before. That they should have met with success was certain; for the accomplished men who led society in Rome must have felt their beauty even more keenly than the scholars of a more recent time. These lyrics brought the music of Greece, which was their ideal, into their native verse; and a feeling of national pride must have helped to augment their admiration. Horace had tuned his ear upon the lyres of Sappho and Alcæus. He had even in his youth essayed to imitate them in their own tongue,—a mistake as great as for Goethe or Heine to have tried to put their lyrical inspiration into the language of Herrick or of Burns. But Horace was preserved from perseverance in this mistake by his

natural good sense, or, as he puts it himself, with a fair poetic licence (Satires, I. 10), by Rome's great founder Quirinus warning him in a dream, that

> "To think of adding to the mighty throng
> Of the great paragons of Grecian song,
> Were no less mad an act than his who should
> Into a forest carry logs of wood."

These exercises may not, however, have been without their value in enabling him to transfuse the melodic rhythm of the Greeks into his native verse. And as he was the first to do this successfully, if we except Catullus in some slight but exquisite poems, so he was the last. "Of lyrists," says Quintilian, "Horace is alone, one might say, worthy to be read. For he has bursts of inspiration, and is full of playful delicacy and grace; and in the variety of his images, as well as in expression, shows a most happy daring." Time has confirmed the verdict; and it has recently found eloquent expression in the words of one of our greatest scholars:—

"Horace's style," says Mr H. A. J. Munro, in the introduction to his edition of the poet, "is throughout his own, borrowed from none who preceded him, successfully imitated by none who came after him. The Virgilian heroic was appropriated by subsequent generations of poets, and adapted to their purposes with signal success. The hendecasyllable and scazon of Catullus became part and parcel of the poetic heritage of Rome, and Martial employs them only less happily than their matchless creator. But the moulds in which Horace cast his lyrical and his satirical thoughts were broken at his death. The style neither of Persius nor of Juvenal has the faintest resemblance to that of their common master. Statius, whose hendeca-

syllables are passable enough, has given us one Alcaic and one Sapphic ode, which recall the bald and constrained efforts of a modern schoolboy. I am sure he could not have written any two consecutive stanzas of Horace; and if he could not, who could?"

Before he published the first two books of his Odes, Horace had fairly felt his wings, and knew they could carry him gracefully and well. He no longer hesitates, as he had done while a writer of Satires only (p. 55), to claim the title of poet; but at the same time he throws himself, in his introductory Ode, with a graceful deference, upon the judgment of Mæcenas. Let that only seal his lyrics with approval, and he will feel assured of his title to rank with the great sons of song:—

> "Do thou but rank me 'mong
> The sacred bards of lyric song,
> I'll soar beyond the lists of time,
> And strike the stars with head sublime."

In the last Ode, also addressed to Mæcenas, of the Second Book, the poet gives way to a burst of joyous anticipation of future fame, figuring himself as a swan soaring majestically across all the then known regions of the world. When he puts forth the Third Book several years afterwards, he closes it with a similar pæan of triumph, which, unlike most prophecies of the kind, has been completely fulfilled. In both he alludes to the lowliness of his birth, speaking of himself in the former as a child of poor parents—"*pauperum sanguis parentum;*" in the latter as having risen to eminence from a mean estate—"*ex humili potens.*" These touches

of egotism, the sallies of some brighter hour, are not merely venial; they are delightful in a man so habitually modest.

"I've reared a monument, my own,
More durable than brass;
Yea, kingly pyramids of stone
In height it doth surpass.

"Rain shall not sap, nor driving blast
Disturb its settled base,
Nor countless ages rolling past
Its symmetry deface.

"I shall not wholly die. Some part,
Nor that a little, shall
Escape the dark Destroyer's dart,
And his grim festival.

"For long as with his Vestals mute
Rome's Pontifex shall climb
The Capitol, my fame shall shoot
Fresh buds through future time.

"Where brawls loud Aufidus, and came
Parch'd Daunus erst, a horde
Of rustic boors to sway, my name
Shall be a household word;

"As one who rose from mean estate,
The first with poet fire
Æolic song to modulate
To the Italian lyre.

"Then grant, Melpomene, thy son
Thy guerdon proud to wear,
And Delphic laurels, duly won,
Bind thou upon my hair!"

CHAPTER IX.

HORACE'S RELATIONS WITH AUGUSTUS.—HIS LOVE OF INDEPENDENCE.

No intimate friend of Mæcenas was likely to be long a stranger to Augustus; and it is most improbable that Augustus, who kept up his love of good literature amid all the distractions of conquest and empire, should not have early sought the acquaintance of a man of such conspicuous ability as Horace. But when they first became known to each other is uncertain. In more than one of the Epodes Horace speaks of him, but not in terms to imply personal acquaintance. Some years further on it is different. When Trebatius (Satires, II. 1) is urging the poet, if write he must, to renounce satire, and to sing of Cæsar's triumphs, from which he would reap gain as well as glory, Horace replies,—

> "Most worthy sir, that's just the thing
> I'd like especially to sing;
> But at the task my spirits faint,
> For 'tis not every one can paint
> Battalions, with their bristling wall
> Of pikes, and make you see the Gaul,

With shivered spear, in death-throe bleed,
Or Parthian stricken from his steed."

Then why not sing, rejoins Trebatius, his justice and his fortitude,

"Like sage Lucilius, in his lays
To Scipio Africanus' praise?"

The reply is that of a man who had obviously been admitted to personal contact with the Cæsar, and, with instinctive good taste, recoiled from doing what he knew would be unacceptable to him, unless called for by some very special occasion:—

"When time and circumstance suggest,
I shall not fail to do my best;
But never words of mine shall touch
Great Cæsar's ear, but only such
As are to the occasion due,
And spring from my conviction, too;
For stroke him with an awkward hand,
And he kicks out—you understand?"

an allusion, no doubt, to the impatience entertained by Augustus, to which Suetonius alludes, of the indiscreet panegyrics of poetasters by which he was persecuted. The gossips of Rome clearly believed (Satires, II. 6) that the poet was intimate with Cæsar; for he is "so close to the gods"—that is, on such a footing with Augustus and his chief advisers—that they assume, as a matter of course, he must have early tidings of all the most recent political news at first hand. However this may be, by the time the Odes were published Horace had overcome any previous

scruples, and sang in no measured terms the praises of him, the back-stroke of whose rebuke he had professed himself so fearful of provoking.

All Horace's prepossessions must have been against one of the leaders before whose opposition Brutus, the ideal hero of his youthful enthusiasm, had succumbed. Neither were the sanguinary proscriptions and ruthless spoliations by which the triumvirate asserted its power, and from a large share of the guilt of which Augustus could not shake himself free, calculated to conciliate his regards. He had much to forget and to forgive before he could look without aversion upon the blood-stained avenger of the great Cæsar. But in times like those in which Horace's lot was cast, we do not judge of men or things as we do when social order is unbroken, when political crime is never condoned, and the usual standards of moral judgment are rigidly enforced. Horace probably soon came to see, what is now very apparent, that when Brutus and his friends struck down Cæsar, they dealt a deathblow to what, but for this event, might have proved to be a well-ordered government. Liberty was dead long before Cæsar aimed at supremacy. It was dead when individuals like Sylla and Marius had become stronger than the laws; and the death of Cæsar was, therefore, but the prelude to fresh disasters, and to the ultimate investiture with absolute power of whoever among the competitors for it, should come triumphantly out of what was sure to be a protracted and a sanguinary struggle. In what state did Horace find Italy after his return from Philippi? Drenched

in the blood of its citizens, desolated by pillage, harassed by daily fears of internecine conflict at home and of invasion from abroad, its sovereignty a stake played for by political gamblers. In such a state of things it was no longer the question, how the old Roman constitution was to be restored, but how the country itself was to be saved from ruin. Prestige was with the nephew of the Cæsar whose memory the Roman populace had almost from his death worshipped as divine; and whose conspicuous ability and address, as well as those of his friends, naturally attracted to his side the ablest survivors of the party of Brutus. The very course of events pointed to him as the future chief of the state. Lepidus, by the sheer weakness and indecision of his character, soon went to the wall; and the power of Antony was weakened by his continued absence from Rome, and ultimately destroyed by the malign influence exerted upon his character by the fascinations of the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra. The disastrous failure of his Parthian expedition (B.C. 36), and the tidings that reached Rome from time to time of the mad extravagance of his private life, of his abandonment of the character of a Roman citizen, and his assumption of the barbaric pomp and habits of an oriental despot, made men look to his great rival as the future head of the state, especially as they saw that rival devoting all his powers to the task of reconciling divisions and restoring peace to a country exhausted by a long series of civil broils, of giving security to life and property at home, and making Rome once more a name

of awe throughout the world. Was it, then, otherwise than natural that Horace, in common with many of his friends, should have been not only content to forget the past, with its bloody and painful records, but should even have attached himself cordially to the party of Augustus? Whatever the private aims of the Cæsar may have been, his public life showed that he had the welfare of his country strongly at heart, and the current of events had made it clear that he at least was alone able to end the strife of faction by assuming the virtual supremacy of the state.

Pollio, Messalla, Varus, and others of the Brutus party, have not been denounced as renegades because they arrived at a similar conclusion, and lent the whole influence of their abilities and their names to the cause of Augustus. Horace has not been so fortunate; and because he has expressed,—what was no doubt the prevailing feeling of his countrymen,—gratitude to Augustus for quelling civil strife, for bringing glory to the empire, and giving peace, security, and happiness to his country by the power of his arms and the wisdom of his administration, the poet has been called a traitor to the nobler principles of his youth—an obsequious flatterer of a man whom he ought to have denounced to posterity as a tyrant. *Adroit esclave* is the epithet applied to him in this respect by Voltaire, who idolises him as a moralist and poet. But it carries little weight in the mouth of the cynic who could fawn with more than courtierly complaisance on a Frederick or a Catherine, and weave graceful flatteries for the Pompadour, and who "dearly loved a

lord" in his practice, however he may have sneered at aristocracy in his writings. But if we put ourselves as far as we can into the poet's place, we shall come to a much more lenient conclusion. He could no doubt appreciate thoroughly the advantages of a free republic or of a purely constitutional government, and would, of course, have preferred either of these for his country. But while theory pointed in that direction, facts were all pulling the opposite way. The materials for the establishment of such a state of things did not exist in a strong middle class or an equal balance of parties. The choice lay between the anarchy of a continued strife of selfish factions, and the concentration of power in the hands of some individual who should be capable of enforcing law at home and commanding respect abroad. So at least Horace obviously thought; and surely it is reasonable to suppose that the man, whose integrity and judgment in all other matters are indisputable, was more likely than the acutest critic or historian of modern times can possibly be to form a just estimate of what was the possible best for his country, under the actual circumstances of the time.

Had Horace at once become the panegyrist of the Cæsar, the sincerity of his convictions might have been open to question. But thirteen years at least had elapsed between the battle of Philippi and the composition of the Second Ode of the First Book, which is the first direct acknowledgment by Horace of Augustus as the chief of the state. This Ode is directly inspired by gratitude for the cessation of civil

strife, and the skilful administration which had brought things to the point when the whole fighting force of the kingdom, which had so long been wasted in that strife, could be directed to spreading the glory of the Roman name, and securing its supremacy throughout its conquered provinces. The allusions to Augustus in this and others of the earlier Odes are somewhat cold and formal in their tone. There is a visible increase in glow and energy in those of a later date, when, as years went on, the Cæsar established fresh claims on the gratitude of Rome by his firm, sagacious, and moderate policy, by the general prosperity which grew up under his administration, by the success of his arms, by the great public works which enhanced the splendour and convenience of the capital, by the restoration of the laws, and by his zealous endeavour to stem the tide of immorality which had set in during the protracted disquietudes of the civil wars. It is true that during this time Augustus was also establishing the system of Imperialism, which contained in itself the germs of tyranny, with all its brutal excesses on the one hand, and its debasing influence upon the subject nation on the other. But we who have seen into what it developed must remember that these baneful fruits of the system were of lengthened growth; and Horace, who saw no farther into the future than the practical politicians of his time, may be forgiven if he dwelt only upon the immediate blessings which the government of Augustus effected, and the peace and security which came with a tenfold welcome after the long agonies of the civil wars.

The glow and sincerity of feeling of which we have spoken are conspicuous in the following Ode (IV. 2), addressed to Iulus Antonius, the son of the triumvir, of whose powers as a poet nothing is known beyond the implied recognition of them contained in this Ode. The Sicambri, with two other German tribes, had crossed the Rhine, laid waste part of the Roman territory in Gaul, and inflicted so serious a blow on Lollius, the Roman legate, that Augustus himself repaired to Gaul to retrieve the defeat and resettle the province. This he accomplished triumphantly (B.C. 17); and we may assume that the Ode was written while the tidings of his success were still fresh, and the Romans, who had been greatly agitated by the defeat of Lollius, were looking eagerly forward to his return. Apart from its other merits, the Ode is interesting from the estimate Horace makes in it of his own powers, and his avowal of the labour which his verses cost him.

"Iulus, he who'd rival Pindar's fame,
On waxen wings doth sweep
The Empyrean steep,
To fall like Icarus, and with his name
Endue the glassy deep.

"Like to a mountain stream, that roars
From bank to bank along,
When Autumn rains are strong,
So deep-mouthed Pindar lifts his voice, and pours
His fierce tumultuous song.

"Worthy Apollo's laurel wreath,
Whether he strike the lyre
To love and young desire,

While bold and lawless numbers grow beneath
His mastering touch of fire;

"Or sings of gods, and monarchs sprung
Of gods, that overthrew
The Centaurs, hideous crew,
And fearless of the monster's fiery tongue,
The dread Chimæra slew;

"Or those the Eléan palm doth lift
To heaven, for winged steed,
Or sturdy arm decreed,
Giving, than hundred statues nobler gift,
The poet's deathless meed;

"Or mourns the youth snatched from his bride,
Extols his manhood clear,
And to the starry sphere
Exalts his golden virtues, scattering wide
The gloom of Orcus drear.

"When the Dircéan swan doth climb
Into the azure sky,
There poised in ether high,
He courts each gale, and floats on wing sublime,
Soaring with steadfast eye.

"I, like the tiny bee, that sips
The fragrant thyme, and strays
Humming through leafy ways,
By Tibur's sedgy banks, with trembling lips
Fashion my toilsome lays.

"But thou, when up the sacred steep
Cæsar, with garlands crowned,
Leads the Sicambrians bound,
With bolder hand the echoing strings shalt sweep,
And bolder measures sound.

"Cæsar, than whom a nobler son
The Fates and Heaven's kind powers
Ne'er gave this earth of ours,
Nor e'er will give though backward time should run
To its first golden hours.

"Thou too shalt sing the joyful days,
The city's festive throng,
When Cæsar, absent long,
At length returns,—the Forum's silent ways,
Serene from strife and wrong.

"Then, though in statelier power it lack,
My voice shall swell the lay,
And sing, 'Oh, glorious day,
Oh, day thrice blest, that gives great Cæsar back
To Rome, from hostile fray!'

"'Io Triumphe!' thrice the cry;
'Io Triumphe!' loud
Shall shout the echoing crowd
The city through, and to the gods on high
Raise incense like a cloud.

"Ten bulls shall pay thy sacrifice,
With whom ten kine shall bleed:
I to the fane will lead
A yearling of the herd, of modest size,
From the luxuriant mead,

"Horned like the moon, when her pale light
Which three brief days have fed,
She trimmeth, and dispread
On his broad brows a spot of snowy white,
All else a tawny red."

Augustus did not return from Gaul, as was expected when this Ode was written, but remained there for

about two years. That this protracted absence caused no little disquietude in Rome is apparent from the following Ode (IV. 5) :—

"From gods benign descended, thou
Best guardian of the fates of Rome,
Too long already from thy home
Hast thou, dear chief, been absent now ;

"Oh, then return, the pledge redeem,
Thou gav'st the Senate, and once more
Its light to all the land restore ;
For when thy face, like spring-tide's gleam,

"Its brightness on the people sheds,
Then glides the day more sweetly by,
A brighter blue pervades the sky,
The sun a richer radiance spreads !

"As on her boy the mother calls,
Her boy, whom envious tempests keep
Beyond the vexed Carpathian deep,
From his dear home, till winter falls,

"And still with vow and prayer she cries,
Still gazes on the winding shore,
So yearns the country evermore
For Cæsar, with fond, wistful eyes.

"For safe the herds range field and fen,
Full-headed stand the shocks of grain,
Our sailors sweep the peaceful main,
And man can trust his fellow-men.

"No more adulterers stain our beds,
Laws, morals, both that taint efface,
The husband in the child we trace,
And close on crime sure vengeance treads.

"The Parthian, under Cæsar's reign,
Or icy Scythian, who can dread,
Or all the tribes barbarian bred
By Germany, or ruthless Spain?

"Now each man, basking on his slopes,
Weds to his widowed trees the vine,
Then, as he gaily quaffs his wine,
Salutes thee god of all his hopes;

"And prayers to thee devoutly sends,
With deep libations; and, as Greece
Ranks Castor and great Hercules,
Thy godship with his Lares blends.

"Oh, may'st thou on Hesperia shine,
Her chief, her joy, for many a day!
Thus, dry-lipped, thus at morn we pray,
Thus pray at eve, when flushed with wine."

"It was perhaps the policy of Augustus," says Macleane, "to make his absence felt; and we may believe that the language of Horace, which bears much more the impress of real feeling than of flattery, represented the sentiments of great numbers at Rome, who felt the want of that presiding genius which had brought the city through its long troubles, and given it comparative peace. There could not be a more comprehensive picture of security and rest obtained through the influence of one mind than is represented in this Ode, if we except that with which no merely mortal language can compare (Isaiah, xi. and lxv.; Micah, iv.)"

We must not assume, from the reference in this and other Odes to the divine origin of Augustus, that this was seriously believed in by Horace, any more than it was by Augustus himself. Popular credulity

ascribed divine honours to great men; and this was the natural growth of a religious system in which a variety of gods and demigods played so large a part. Julius Cæsar claimed—no doubt, for the purpose of impressing the Roman populace—a direct descent from *Alma Venus Genitrix*, as Antony did from Hercules. Altars and temples were dedicated to great statesmen and generals; and the Romans, among the other things which they borrowed from the East, borrowed also the practice of conferring the honours of apotheosis upon their rulers,—the visible agents, in their estimation, of the great invisible power that governed the world. To speak of their divine descent and attributes became part of the common forms of the poetical vocabulary, not inappropriate to the exalted pitch of lyrical enthusiasm. Horace only falls into the prevailing strain, and is not compromising himself by servile flattery, as some have thought, when he speaks in this Ode of Augustus as "from gods benign descended," and in others as "the heaven-sent son of Maia" (I. 2), or as reclining among the gods and quaffing nectar "with lip of deathless bloom" (III. 3). In lyrical poetry all this was quite in place. But when the poet contracts his wings, and drops from its empyrean to the level of the earth, he speaks to Augustus and of him simply as he thought (Epistles, II. 1)—as a man on whose shoulders the weight of empire rested, who protected the commonwealth by the vigour of his armies, and strove to grace it by "sweeter manners, purer laws." He adds, it is true,—

" You while in life are honoured as divine,
And vows and oaths are taken at your shrine;
So Rome pays honour to her man of men,
Ne'er seen on earth before, ne'er to be seen again "—(C.)

but this is no more than a statement of a fact. Altars were erected to Augustus, much against his will, and at these men made their prayers or plighted their oaths every day. There is not a word to imply either that Augustus took these divine honours, or that Horace joined in ascribing them, seriously.

It is of some importance to the argument in favour of Horace's sincerity and independence, that he had no selfish end to serve by standing well with Augustus. We have seen that he was more than content with the moderate fortune secured to him by Mæcenas. Wealth had no charms for him. His ambition was to make his mark as a poet. His happiness lay in being his own master. There is no trace of his having at any period been swayed by other views. What then had he to gain by courting the favour of the head of the state? But the argument goes further. When Augustus found the pressure of his private correspondence too great, as his public duties increased, and his health, never robust, began to fail, he offered Horace the post of his private secretary. The poet declined on the ground of health. He contrived to do so in such a way as to give no umbrage by the refusal; nay, the letters which are quoted in the life of Horace ascribed to Suetonius show that Augustus begged the poet to treat him on the same footing as if he had accepted the office, and actually become a member of

his household. "Our friend Septimius," he says in another letter, "will tell you how much you are in my thoughts; for something led to my speaking of you before him. Neither, if you were too proud to accept my friendship, do I mean to deal with you in the same spirit." There could have been little of the courtier in the man who was thus addressed. Horace apparently felt that Augustus and himself were likely to be better friends at a distance. He had seen enough of court life to know how perilous it is to that independence which was his dearest possession. "*Dulcis inexpertis cultura potentis amici,—Expertus metuit,*" is his ultimate conviction on this head (Epistles, I. 18)—

> "Till time has made us wise, 'tis sweet to wait
> Upon the smiles and favour of the great;
> But he that once has ventured that career
> Shrinks from its perils with instinctive fear."

In another place (Epistles, I. 10) he says, "*Fuge magna; licet sub paupere tecto Reges et regum vita præcurrere amicos*"—

> "Keep clear of courts; a homely life transcends
> The vaunted bliss of monarchs and their friends." (G.)

But apart from such considerations, life would have lost its charm for Horace, had he put himself within the trammels of official service. At no time would these have been tolerable to him; but as he advanced into middle age, the freedom of entire independence, the refreshing solitudes of the country, leisure for study

and reflection, became more and more precious to him. The excitements and gaieties and social enjoyments of Rome were all very well, but a little of them went a great way. They taxed his delicate health, and they interfered with the graver studies, to which he became daily more inclined as the years went by. Not all his regard for Mæcenas himself, deep as it was, could induce him to stay in town to enliven the leisure hours of the statesman by his companionship at the expense of those calm seasons of communion with nature and the books of the great men of old, in which he could indulge his irresistible craving for some solution of the great problems of life and philosophy. Men like Mæcenas, whose power and wealth are practically unbounded, are apt to become importunate even in their friendships, and to think that everything should give way to the gratification of their wishes. Something of this spirit had obviously been shown towards Horace. Mæcenas may have expressed himself in a tone of complaint, either to the poet himself, or in some way that had reached his ears, about his prolonged absence in the country, which implied that he considered his bounties had given him a claim upon the time of Horace which was not sufficiently considered. This could only have been a burst of momentary impatience, for the nature of Mæcenas was too generous to admit of any other supposition. But Horace felt it; and with the utmost delicacy of tact, but with a decision that left no room for mistake, he lost no time in letting Mæcenas know, that rather than brook control upon his movements, however

slight, he will cheerfully forego the gifts of his friend, dear as they are, and grateful for them as he must always be. To this we owe the following Epistle (I. 7). That Mæcenas loved his friend all the better for it—he could scarcely respect him more than he seems to have done from the first—we may be very sure.

Only five days, I said, I should be gone;
Yet August's past, and still I linger on.
'Tis true I've broke my promise. But if you
Would have me well, as I am sure you do,
Grant me the same indulgence, which, were I
Laid up with illness, you would not deny,
Although I claim it only for the fear
Of being ill, this deadly time of year,
When autumn's clammy heat and early fruits
Deck undertakers out, and inky mutes;
When young mammas, and fathers to a man,
With terrors for their sons and heirs are wan;
When stifling anteroom, or court, distils
Fevers wholesale, and breaks the seals of wills.
Should winter swathe the Alban fields in snow,
Down to the sea your poet means to go,
To nurse his ailments, and, in cosy nooks
Close huddled up, to loiter o'er his books.
But once let zephyrs blow, sweet friend, and then,
If then you'll have him, he will quit his den,
With the first swallow hailing you again.
When you bestowed on me what made me rich,
Not in the spirit was it done, in which
Your bluff Calabrian on a guest will thrust
His pears: "Come, eat, man, eat—you can, you must!"
"Indeed, indeed, my friend, I've had enough."
"Then take some home!" "You're too obliging." "Stuff!

If you have pockets full of them, I guess,
Your little lads will like you none the less."
"I really can't—thanks all the same!" "You won't?
Why then the pigs shall have them, if you don't."
'Tis fools and prodigals, whose gifts consist
Of what they spurn, or what is never missed:
Such tilth will never yield, and never could,
A harvest save of coarse ingratitude.
A wise good man is evermore alert,
When he encounters it, to own desert;
Nor is he one, on whom you'd try to pass
For sterling currency mere lackered brass.
For me, 'twill be my aim myself to raise
Even to the flattering level of your praise;
But if you'd have me always by your side,
Then give me back the chest deep-breathed and wide,
The low brow clustered with its locks of black,
The flow of talk, the ready laugh, give back,
The woes blabbed o'er our wine, when Cinara chose
To teaze me, cruel flirt—ah, happy woes!
Through a small hole a field-mouse, lank and thin,
Had squeezed his way into a barley bin,
And, having fed to fatness on the grain,
Tried to get out, but tried and squeezed in vain.
"Friend," cried a weasel, loitering thereabout,
"Lean you went in, and lean you must get out."
Now, at my head if folks this story throw,
Whate'er I have I'm ready to forego;
I am not one, with forced meats in my throat,
Fine saws on poor men's dreamless sleep to quote.
Unless in soul as very air I'm free,
Not all the wealth of Araby for me.
You've ofttimes praised the reverent, yet true
Devotion, which my heart has shown for you.
King, father, I have called you, nor been slack
In words of gratitude behind your back;

But even your bounties, if you care to try,
You'll find Ican renounce without a sigh.
Not badly young Telemachus replied,
Ulysses' son, that man so sorely tried:
"No mettled steeds in Ithaca we want;
The ground is broken there, the herbage scant.
Let me, Atrides, then, thy gifts decline,
In thy hands they are better far than mine!"
Yes, little things fit little folks. In Rome
The Great I never feel myself at home.
Let me have Tibur, and its dreamful ease,
Or soft Tarentum's nerve-relaxing breeze.
Philip, the famous counsel, on a day—
A burly man, and wilful in his way—
From court returning, somewhere about two,
And grumbling, for his years were far from few,
That the Carinæ* were so distant, though
But from the Forum half a mile or so,
Descried a fellow in a barber's booth,
All by himself, his chin fresh shaved and smooth,
Trimming his nails, and with the easy air
Of one uncumbered by a wish or care.
"Demetrius!"—'twas his page, a boy of tact,
In comprehension swift, and swift in act,
"Go, ascertain his rank, name, fortune; track
His father, patron!" In a trice he's back.
"An auction-crier, Volteius Mena, sir,
Means poor enough, no spot on character,
Good or to work or idle, get or spend,
Has his own house, delights to see a friend,
Fond of the play, and sure, when work is done,
Of those who crowd the Campus to make one."

* The street where he lived, or, as we should say, "Ship Street." The name was due probably to the circumstance of models of ships being set up in it.

"I'd like to hear all from himself. Away,
Bid him come dine with me—at once!—to-day!"
Mena some trick in the request divines,
Turns it all ways, then civilly declines.
"What! Says me nay?" "'Tis even so, sir. Why?
Can't say. Dislikes you, or, more likely, shy."
Next morning Philip searches Mena out,
And finds him vending to a rabble rout
Old crazy lumber, frippery of the worst,
And with all courtesy salutes him first.
Mena pleads occupation, ties of trade,
His service else he would by dawn have paid,
At Philip's house,—was grieved to think, that how
He should have failed to notice him till now.
"On one condition I accept your plea.
You come this afternoon, and dine with me."
"Yours to command." "Be there, then, sharp at four!
Now go, work hard, and make your little more!"
At dinner Mena rattled on, expressed
Whate'er came uppermost, then home to rest.
The hook was baited craftily, and when
The fish came nibbling ever and again,
At morn a client, and, when asked to dine,
Not now at all in humour to decline,
Philip himself one holiday drove him down,
To see his villa some few miles from town.
Mena keeps praising up, the whole way there,
The Sabine country, and the Sabine air;
So Philip sees his fish is fairly caught,
And smiles with inward triumph at the thought.
Resolved at any price to have his whim,—
For that is best of all repose to him,—
Seven hundred pounds he gives him there and then,
Proffers on easy terms as much again,
And so persuades him, that, with tastes like his,
He ought to buy a farm;—so bought it is.

Not to detain you longer than enough,
The dapper cit becomes a farmer bluff,
Talks drains and subsoils, ever on the strain
Grows lean, and ages with the lust of gain.
But when his sheep are stolen, when murrains smite
His goats, and his best crops are killed with blight,
When at the plough his oxen drop down dead,
Stung with his losses, up one night from bed
He springs, and on a cart-horse makes his way,
All wrath, to Philip's house, by break of day.
"How's this?" cries Philip, seeing him unshorn
And shabby. "Why, Vulteius, you look worn.
You work, methinks, too long upon the stretch."
"Oh, that's not it, my patron. Call me wretch!
That is the only fitting name for me.
Oh, by thy Genius, by the gods that be
Thy hearth's protectors, I beseech, implore,
Give me, oh, give me back my life of yore!"
If for the worse you find you've changed your place,
Pause not to think but straight your steps retrace.
In every state the maxim still is true,
On your own last take care to fit your shoe!

CHAPTER X.

DELICACY OF HORACE'S HEALTH.—HIS CHEERFULNESS.—LOVE OF BOOKS.—HIS PHILOSOPHY PRACTICAL.—EPISTLE TO AUGUSTUS.—DEATH.

HORACE had probably passed forty when the Epistle just quoted was written. Describing himself at forty-four (Epistles, I. 20), he says he was "prematurely grey,"—his hair, as we have just seen (p. 185), having been originally black,—adding that he is

> "In person small, one to whom warmth is life,
> In temper hasty, yet averse from strife."

His health demanded constant care; and we find him writing (Epistles, I. 15) to a friend, to ask what sort of climate and people are to be found at Velia and Salernum,—the one a town of Lucania, the other of Campania,—as he has been ordered by his doctor to give up his favourite watering-place, Baiæ, as too relaxing. This doctor was Antonius Musa, a great apostle of the cold-water cure, by which he had saved the life of Augustus when in extreme danger. The remedy instantly became fashionable, and continued

so until the Emperor's nephew, the young Marcellus, died under the treatment. Horace's inquiries are just such as a valetudinarian fond of his comforts would be likely to make:—

"Which place is best supplied with corn, d'ye think?
Have they rain-water or fresh springs to drink?
Their wines I care not for, when at my farm
I can drink any sort without much harm;
But at the sea I need a generous kind
To warm my veins, and pass into my mind,
Enrich me with new hopes, choice words supply,
And make me comely in a lady's eye.
Which tract is best for game? on which sea-coast
Urchins and other fish abound the most?
That so, when I return, my friends may see
A sleek Phæacian * come to life in me:
These things you needs must tell me, Vala dear,
And I no less must act on what I hear." (C.)

Valetudinarian though he was, Horace maintains, in his later as in his early writings, a uniform cheerfulness. This never forsakes him; for life is a boon for which he is ever grateful. The gods have allotted him an ample share of the means of enjoyment, and it is his own fault if he suffers self-created worries or desires to vex him. By the questions he puts to a friend in one of the latest of his Epistles (II. 2), we see what was the discipline he applied to himself—

"You're not a miser: has all other vice
Departed in the train of avarice?
Or do ambitious longings, angry fret,
The terror of the grave, torment you yet?

* The Phæacians were proverbially fond of good living.

Can you make sport of portents, gipsy crones,
Hobgoblins, dreams, raw head and bloody bones?
Do you count up your birthdays year by year,
And thank the gods with gladness and blithe cheer,
O'erlook the failings of your friends, and grow
Gentler and better as your sand runs low?" (C.)

And to this beautiful catalogue of what should be a good man's aims, let us add the picture of himself which Horace gives us in another and earlier Epistle (I. 18):—

"For me, when freshened by my spring's pure cold,
Which makes my villagers look pinched and old,
What prayers are mine? 'O may I yet possess
The goods I have, or, if heaven pleases, less!
Let the few years that Fate may grant me still
Be all my own, not held at others' will!
Let me have books, and stores for one year hence,
Nor make my life one flutter of suspense!'
But I forbear; sufficient 'tis to pray
To Jove for what he gives and takes away;
Grant life, grant fortune, for myself I'll find
That best of blessings—a contented mind." (C.)

"Let me have books!" These play a great part in Horace's life. They were not to him, what Montaigne calls them, "a languid pleasure," but rather as they were to Wordsworth—

"A substantial world, both fresh and good,
Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness may grow."

Next to a dear friend, they were Horace's most cherished companions. Not for amusement merely, and

the listless luxury of the self-wrapt lounger, were they prized by him, but as teachers to correct his faults, to subdue his evil propensities, to develop his higher nature, to purify his life (Epistles, I. 1), and to help him towards attaining "that best of blessings, a contented mind:"—

"Say, is your bosom fevered with the fire
Of sordid avarice or unchecked desire?
Know there are spells will help you to allay
The pain, and put good part of it away.
You're bloated by ambition? take advice;
Yon book will ease you, if you read it *thrice*.
Run through the list of faults; whate'er you be,
Coward, pickthank, spitfire, drunkard, debauchee,
Submit to culture patiently, you'll find
Her charms can humanise the rudest mind." (C.)

Horace's taste was as catholic in philosophy as in literature. He was of no school, but sought in the teachings of them all such principles as would make life easier, better, and happier: "*Condo et compono, quæ mox depromere possum*"—

"I search and search, and where I find I lay
The wisdom up against a rainy day." (C.)

He is evermore urging his friends to follow his example;—to resort like himself to these "spells,"—the *verba et voces*, by which he brought his own restless desires and disquieting aspirations into subjection, and fortified himself in the bliss of contentment. He saw they were letting the precious hours slip from their grasp,—hours that might have been so happy,

but were so weighted with disquiet and weariness; and he loved his friends too well to keep silence on this theme. We, like them, it has been admirably said,* are "possessed by the ambitions, the desires, the weariness, the disquietudes, which pursued the friends of Horace. If he does not always succeed with us, any more than with them, in curing us of these, he at all events soothes and tranquillises us in the moments which we spend with him. He augments, on the other hand, the happiness of those who are already happy; and there is not one of us but feels under obligation to him for his gentle and salutary lessons,—*verbaque et voces*,—for his soothing or invigorating balsams, as much as though this gifted physician of soul and body had compounded them specially for ourselves."

When he published the First Book of Epistles he seems to have thought the time come for him to write no more lyrics (Epistles, I. 1):—

> "Sooth now I bid my idle songs adieu,
> And turn my thoughts to what is just and true." (C.)

Graver habits, and a growing fastidiousness of taste, were likely to give rise to this feeling. But a poet can no more renounce his lyre than a painter his palette; and his fine "Secular Hymn," and many of the Odes of the Fourth Book, which were written after this period, prove that, so far from suffering any decay in poetical power, he had even gained in force of con-

* Étude Morale et Littéraire sur les Épitres d'Horace; par J. A. Estienne. Paris, 1851. P. 212.

ception, and in that *curiosa felicitas*, that exquisite felicity of expression, which has been justly ascribed to him by Petronius. Several years afterwards, when writing of the mania for scribbling verse which had beset the Romans, as if, like Dogberry's reading and writing, the faculty of writing poetry came by nature, he alludes to his own sins in the same direction with a touch of his old irony (Epistles, II. 1):—

"E'en I, who vow I never write a verse,
Am found as false as Parthia, maybe worse;
Before the dawn I rouse myself and call
For pens and parchment, writing-desk, and all.
None dares be pilot who ne'er steered a craft;
No untrained nurse administers a draught;
None but skilled workmen handle workmen's tools;
But verses all men scribble, wise or fools." (C.)

Or, as Pope with finer emphasis translates his words—

"But those who cannot write, and those who can,
All rhyme, and scrawl, and scribble to a man."

It was very well for Horace to laugh at his own inability to abstain from verse-making, but, had he been ever so much inclined to silence, his friends would not have let him rest. Some wanted an Ode, some an Epode, some a Satire (Epistles, II. 2)—

"Three hungry guests for different dishes call,
And how's one host to satisfy them all?" (C.)

And there was one friend, whose request it was not easy to deny. This was Augustus. Ten years after the

imperial power had been placed in his hands (B.C. 17), he resolved to celebrate a great national festival in honour of his own successful career. Horace was called on to write an Ode, known in his works as "The Secular Hymn," to be sung upon the occasion by twenty-seven boys and twenty-seven girls of noble birth. "The Ode," says Macleane, "was sung at the most solemn part of the festival, while the Emperor was in person offering sacrifice at the second hour of the night, on the river side, upon three altars, attended by the fifteen men who presided over religious affairs. The effect must have been very beautiful, and no wonder if the impression on Horace's feelings was strong and lasting." He was obviously pleased at being chosen for the task, and not without pride,—a very just one,—at the way it was performed. In the Ode (IV. 6), which seems to have been a kind of prelude to the "Secular Hymn," he anticipates that the virgins who chanted it will on their marriage-day be proud to recall the fact that they had taken part in this oratorio under his baton :—

"When the cyclical year brought its festival days,
My voice led the hymn of thanksgiving and praise,
So sweet, the immortals to hear it were fain,
And 'twas HORACE THE POET who taught me the strain!"

It was probably at the suggestion of Augustus, also, that he wrote the magnificent Fourth and Fourteenth Odes of the Fourth Book. These were written, however, to celebrate great national victories, and were pitched in the high key appropriate to the theme. But this was not enough for Augustus. He wanted

something more homely and human, and was envious of the friends to whom Horace had addressed the charming Epistles of the First Book, a copy of which the poet had sent to him by the hands of a friend (Epistles, I. 13), but only to be given to the Cæsar,

> "If he be well, and in a happy mood,
> And ask to have them,—be it understood."

And so he wrote to Horace—the letter is quoted by Suetonius—"Look you, I take it much amiss that none of your writings of this class are addressed to me. Are you afraid it will damage your reputation with posterity to be thought to have been one of my intimates?" Such a letter, had Horace been a vain man or an indiscreet, might have misled him into approaching Augustus with the freedom he courted. But he fell into no such error. There is perfect frankness throughout the whole of the Epistle, with which he met the Emperor's request (II. 1), but the social distance between them is maintained with an emphasis which it is impossible not to feel. The Epistle opens by skilfully insinuating that, if the poet has not before addressed the Emperor, it is that he may not be suspected of encroaching on the hours which were due to the higher cares of state:—

> "Since you, great Cæsar, singly wield the charge
> Of Rome's concerns, so manifold and large,—
> With sword and shield the commonwealth protect,
> With morals grace it, and with laws correct,—
> The bard, methinks, would do a public wrong,
> Who, having gained your ear, should keep it long." (C.)

It is not while they live, he continues, that, in the ordinary case, the worth of the great benefactors of mankind is recognised. Only after they are dead, do misunderstanding and malice give way to admiration and love. Rome, it is true, has been more just. It has appreciated, and it avows, how much it owes to Augustus. But the very same people who have shown themselves wise and just in this are unable to extend the same principle to living literary genius. A poet must have been long dead and buried, or he is nought. The very flaws of old writers are cried up as beauties by pedantic critics, while the highest excellence in a writer of the day meets with no response.

"Had Greece but been as carping and as cold
To new productions, what would now be old?
What standard works would there have been, to come
Beneath the public eye, the public thumb?" (C.)

Let us then look the facts fairly in the face; let us "clear our minds of cant." If a poem be bad in itself, let us say so, no matter how old or how famous it be; if it be good, let us be no less candid, though the poet be still struggling into notice among us.

Thanks, he proceeds, to our happy times, men are now devoting themselves to the arts of peace. "*Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit*"—"Her ruthless conqueror Greece has overcome." The Romans of the better class, who of old thought only of the triumphs of the forum, or of turning over their money profitably, are now bitten by a literary furor.

"Pert boys, prim fathers, dine in wreaths of bay,
And 'twixt the courses warble out the lay." (C.)

But this craze is no unmixed evil; for, take him all in all, your poet can scarcely be a bad fellow. Pulse and second bread are a banquet for him. He is sure not to be greedy or close-fisted; for to him, as Tennyson in the same spirit says, "Mellow metres are more than ten per cent." Neither is he likely to cheat his partner or his ward. He may cut a poor figure in a campaign, but he does the state good service at home.

"His lessons form the child's young lips, and wean
The boyish ear from words and tales unclean;
As years roll on, he moulds the ripening mind,
And makes it just and generous, sweet and kind;
He tells of worthy precedents, displays
The examples of the past to after days,
Consoles affliction, and disease allays." (C.)

Horace then goes on to sketch the rise of poetry and the drama among the Romans, glancing, as he goes, at the perverted taste which was making the stage the vehicle of mere spectacle, and intimating his own high estimate of the dramatic writer in words which Shakespeare seems to have been meant to realise:—

"That man I hold true master of his art,
Who with fictitious woes can wring my heart;
Can rouse me, soothe me, pierce me with the thrill
Of vain alarm, and, as by magic skill,
Bear me to Thebes, to Athens, where you will." (C.)

Here, as elsewhere, Horace treats dramatic writing as the very highest exercise of poetic genius; and, in

dwelling on it as he does, he probably felt sure of carrying with him the fullest sympathies of Augustus. For among his varied literary essays, the Emperor, like most dilettanti, had tried his hand upon a tragedy. Failing, however, to satisfy himself, he had the rarer wisdom to suppress it. The story of his play was that of Ajax, and when asked one day how it was getting on, he replied that his hero "had finished his career upon a sponge!"—"*Ajacem suum in spongio incubuisse.*"

From the drama Horace proceeds to speak of the more timid race of bards, who, "instead of being hissed and acted, would be read," and who, himself included, are apt to do themselves harm in various ways through over-sensitiveness or simplicity. Thus, for example, they will intrude their works on Augustus, when he is busy or tired; or wince, poor sensitive rogues, if a friend ventures to take exception to a verse; or bore him by repeating, unasked, one or other of their pet passages, or by complaints that their happiest thoughts and most highly-polished turns escape unnoticed; or, worse folly than all, they will expect to be sent for by Augustus the moment he comes across their poems, and told "to starve no longer, and go writing on." Yet, continues Horace, it is better the whole tribe should be disappointed, than that a great man's glory should be dimmed, like Alexander's, by being sung of by a second-rate poet. And wherefore should it be so, when Augustus has at command the genius of such men as Virgil and Varius? They, and they only, are the fit laureates of the Emperor's great achievements; and in

this way the poet returns, like a skilful composer, to the *motif* with which he set out—distrust of his own powers, which has restrained, and must continue to restrain, him from pressing himself and his small poetic powers upon the Emperor's notice.

In the other poems which belong to this period—the Second Epistle of the Second Book, and the Epistle to the Pisos, generally known as the *Ars Poetica*—Horace confines himself almost exclusively to purely literary topics. The dignity of literature was never better vindicated than in these Epistles. In Horace's estimation it was a thing always to be approached with reverence. Mediocrity in it was intolerable. Genius is much, but genius without art will not win immortality; "for a good poet's made, as well as born." There must be a working up to the highest models, a resolute intolerance of anything slight or slovenly, a fixed purpose to put what the writer has to express into forms at once the most beautiful, suggestive, and compact. The mere trick of literary composition Horace holds exceedingly cheap. Brilliant nonsense finds no allowance from him. Truth—truth in feeling and in thought—must be present, if the work is to have any value. "*Scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons*"—

> "Of writing well, be sure the secret lies
> In wisdom, therefore study to be wise." (C.)

Whatever the form of composition, heroic, didactic, lyric, or dramatic, it must be pervaded by unity of feeling and design; and no style is good, or illustration

endurable, which either overlays or does not harmonise with the subject in hand.

The Epistle to the Pisos does not profess to be a complete exposition of the poet's art. It glances only at small sections of that wide theme. So far as it goes, it is all gold, full of most instructive hints for a sound critical taste and a pure literary style. It was probably meant to cure the younger Piso of that passion for writing verse which had, as we have seen, spread like a plague among the Romans, and which made a visit to the public baths a penance to critical ears,—for there the poetasters were always sure of an audience,—and added new terrors to the already sufficiently formidable horrors of the Roman banquet.* When we find an experienced critic like Horace urging young Piso, as he does, to keep what he writes by him for nine years, the conclusion is irresistible, that he hoped by that time the writer would see the wisdom of suppressing his crude lucubrations altogether. No one knew better than Horace that first-class work never wants such protracted mellowing.

Soon after this poem was written the great palace on the Esquiline lost its master. He died (B.C. 8) in the middle of the year, bequeathing his poet-friend to the care of Augustus in the words "*Horâti Flacci, ut mei, esto memor*,"—"Bear Horace in your memory as you would myself." But the legacy was not long upon

* This theory has been worked out with great ability by the late M. A. Baron, in his 'Epitre d'Horace aux Pisons sur l'Art Poétique'—Bruxelles, 1857; which is accompanied by a masterly translation and notes of great value.

the emperor's hands. Seventeen years before, Horace had written:

> "Think not that I have sworn a bootless oath;
> Yes, we shall go, shall go,
> Hand linked in hand, where'er thou leadest, both
> The last sad road below."

The lines must have rung in the poet's ears like a sad refrain. The Digentia lost its charm; he could not see its crystal waters for the shadows of Charon's rueful stream. The prattle of his loved Bandusian spring could not wean his thoughts from the vision of his other self wandering unaccompanied along that "last sad road." We may fancy that Horace was thenceforth little seen in his accustomed haunts. He who had so often soothed the sorrows of other bereaved hearts, answered with a wistful smile to the friendly consolations of the many that loved him. His work was done. It was time to go away. Not all the skill of Orpheus could recall him whom he had lost. The welcome end came sharply and suddenly; and one day, when the bleak November wind was whirling down the oak-leaves on his well-loved brook, the servants of his Sabine farm heard that they should no more see the good, cheery master, whose pleasant smile and kindly word had so often made their labours light. There was many a sad heart, too, we may be sure, in Rome, when the wit who never wounded, the poet who ever charmed, the friend who never failed, was laid in a corner of the Esquiline, close to the tomb of his "dear knight Mæcenas." He died on the

27th November B.C. 8, the kindly, lonely man, leaving to Augustus what little he possessed. One would fain trust his own words were inscribed upon his tomb, as in the supreme hour the faith they expressed was of a surety strong within his heart,—

NON OMNIS MORIAR.

END OF HORACE.

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